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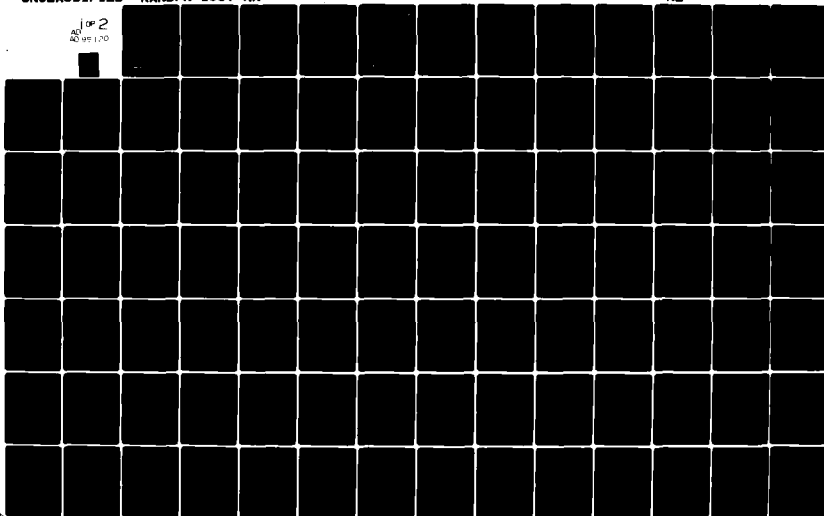
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A RAND NOTE

GERMAN STRATEGIC DECEPTION IN THE 1930s

Michael Mihalka

July 1980

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Prepared For

The Director of Net Assessment,
Office of the Secretary of Defense

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Describes how the German government manipulated perceptions of its military capabilities and political intentions throughout the 1930s. Prior to 1935, the Nazis continued and accelerated the program of clandestine armament begun under the Weimar regime. Hitler first understated the size of his forces to prevent intervention against German rearmament and then overstated the size of his forces to deter intervention in the succession of diplomatic coups--the Rhineland occupation, Austria, Munich, and Prague--after 1935. Even in war, the deception continued to work. Germany, not France or Britain, ended the "phony war" in 1940. Hitler could not have successfully pursued his strategic objectives in the 1930s without deception. German strategic deception continued a tradition traceable through Machiavelli to the rise of the Roman Empire and provides lessons for how countries today can serve strategic objectives through deception.

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PREFACE

This note addresses some of the problems raised by the practice of strategic deception in peacetime, the relevance of the Munich analogy for the contemporary era, the influence that images of military power can exert on policy, and the history of Anglo-German interactions over air policy in the 1930s.

Although many studies have appeared on the use of deception during wartime, few have attempted to develop a systematic and theoretical approach to the practice of deception in peacetime. This study not only brings together, for the first time, details of how the Germans attempted to deceive their adversaries during the 1930s, but also places those deceptions within the wider context of Hitler's foreign policy. Besides adding to the fund of knowledge about events leading to World War II, the study contributes to an understanding of how perceptions of strategic strength affect policy, a problem of importance during the current period of "strategic parity" between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Portions of this research were sponsored by the Directorate of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense.

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SUMMARY

German attempts to manipulate perceptions of their political intentions and military capabilities in the 1930s provides a major point of departure for understanding strategic deception. Echoes of many current issues found expression in the 1930s: parity and measures of equivalence; deterrence by denial versus deterrence by punishment; the knockout blow and the disarming first strike; the rapid pace of technological obsolescence; the apparently asymmetric constraints on the defense economics of democratic and totalitarian regimes; and strategic deception, the political consequences of the image of military power. The Munich analogy, the ready resort to cries of appeasement when offering concessions to the Soviets, and the Soviet military buildup which some have compared to the German buildup in the 1930s provide additional reasons for studying German strategic deception in World War II. Discussions of deception have generally ignored its peacetime applications and focused instead on its role in warfare or in achieving strategic surprise. Whaley has documented the effect of surprise in warfare and the role that deception has played in furthering surprise.¹ Surprise results from confusion over the location, the time, and the strength of forces, and the style of attack. Deception can aid surprise by leading the victim to select the wrong alternative or make an incorrect assessment.

Sun Tzu integrated deception into his theory of strategy but in effect offered only precepts. Machiavelli viewed deception as important in compensating for weakness. Clausewitz dismissed surprise and deception as theoretically appealing but practically rarely decisive. Machiavelli argued that the success of an overall program of expansion depended on a speedy resolution of each war to provide a territorial basis for fighting the next. Deception played a major role in projecting an image of a military sufficiently strong to deter the intervention of third parties during this period of conquest.

A country's strategy for conducting foreign policy, if it has one at all, provides the context for interpreting deception. Deceptions

¹Barton Whaley, *Stratagem: Deception and Surprise in War* (MIT Center for International Studies, C69-9; Cambridge, Ma., 1969).

need not result from pure fabrication; the most effective deceptions occur "naturally" without the deceiver having to mislead the adversary. Tactical and operational deceptions occur to further the objectives of the moment. The attempt by the Czechs in the 1938 May crisis illustrates that countries may use deception for other than aggressive motives.

A country practices deception in part to fool or neutralize the intelligence operations of its adversaries. Descriptive theories of intelligence provide guides for successful deception. Countries can disguise their strategic intent by exploiting the fact that their opponents often will conduct diplomacy to prevent the last war. If a country can deceive others about its long-term aggressive designs by excusing its actions as revisionism or opportunism, then it can succeed in achieving strategic surprise as well. Confusion over an opponent's capacity to produce weapons greatly contributes to attempts to project greater than actual, and in certain cases, less than actual, military strength. The tendency of military planners to make worst case assumptions will generally lead to inflated projections in the case of uncertainty, a tendency which a deception planner can easily exploit. The source in which foreign intelligence puts the most credence should become the major target for deception. Although deception should occasionally induce uncertainty, it should strive to make the opponent extremely certain but wrong.

Although some have viewed Hitler as a simple opportunist, he sketched a program for expansion in the 1920s, the general outlines of which he attempted to fulfill in the 1930s. Hitler's policy centered on Great Britain; he believed that he could secure British acquiescence in his policy to expand in the East.

Hitler and his subordinates manipulated perceptions of German military strength and political intentions throughout the 1930s. Occasionally, Hitler's subordinates would fabricate deceptions to achieve specific objectives. At other times, the Propaganda Ministry would exploit the competition between aircraft manufacturers to tout German industrial and military prowess. Hitler himself would exploit the confusion of his adversaries regarding the size of the Luftwaffe

to clinch his point. The succession of deceptions individually appear opportunistic; taken together, they form a pattern consistent with Hitler's long-range goals.

The Nazis did not begin clandestine rearmament in 1933; they inherited a military apparatus which had already violated the Versailles Treaty in a number of ways. This tradition within the German military together with its desire to overthrow all the shackles of Versailles greatly facilitated the expansion of clandestine rearmament in 1933.

Although Hitler consolidated his power in the first two years of his rule, he also sped up German clandestine rearmament. Goering, Minister of Aviation, and Milch, head of Lufthansa and later State Secretary for Aviation, promoted the image of a risk air force (analogous to Germany's attempt to build a risk fleet prior to the First World War, a navy sufficiently strong to pose a risk in war for any navy) to deter preventive wars by France and Poland, and to buy time for rearming the army and navy. Britain and France did little to forestall German rearmament, a poorly kept secret. The extent of German rearmament remained unclear even after Germany abrogated the Versailles Treaty with the return to conscription on 16 March 1935.

Hitler actively pursued the British alliance. He used the image of Luftwaffe parity with the Royal Air Force to deceive, in his mind, the British into the Anglo-German naval agreement concluded 18 June 1935. This agreement hammered the last nails into the coffin of Versailles and effectively legitimized German rearmament. But Hitler did not let the veil drop completely. The Rhineland occupation succeeded with an elaborate hoax that included carrying guns not yet synchronized to fire through the propeller. The Nazis reaped in the summer of 1936 the confusion sowed on the true strength of the Luftwaffe. To forestall further British rearmament, Milch staged an episode designed to convince the British that their current rearmament schemes would yield parity with the Germans. The British discovered six months later in the summer of 1937 that they had been misled.

Hitler despaired of the British alliance that would divide the world, leaving Germany with the continent and the British the seas.

The Hossbach conference on 5 November 1937 signaled a hardened line when Hitler removed the conservatives from the army and the Foreign Ministry and exploited Schuschnigg's fumbblings to effect the takeover of Austria. Munich came in September 1938 and Prague in March of 1939. All the while the Germans touted an invincible and strategic air force that they knew full well lacked adequate training, reserves, and ammunition. Deception campaigns preceded Austria, Munich and Prague.

The organization of German deception reflected Hitler's tactics in foreign policy--opportunism in service of long-range objectives. Hitler himself possessed only a vague sense of the military effectiveness of the Luftwaffe and relied heavily on Goering for information. The political potential of the Luftwaffe mattered more to Hitler than whether it could fight a war. This penchant for the appearance but not necessarily the reality of a strong Luftwaffe led to a fixation with numbers that would serve Germany poorly in World War II.

Once in power, Hitler wanted to appear as a "traditional" German statesman in order not to threaten the rearmament program necessary to build the military strength to achieve his goals of Lebensraum in the East and the domination of continental Europe. Hitler succeeded in associating himself with the policies of his predecessors and won a continuation of the appeasement policies of Britain and France as a reward. Hitler would follow each foreign policy coup with a peace initiative and a claim that he had made his "last territorial demand." The British were willing to accept Hitler's quest for a greater Germany so long as it involved only Germans. Prague spoiled Chamberlain's hopes.

The techniques and participants in the successive German deceptions varied. The architects of the Luftwaffe--Goering, Milch, Wever, and Udet--realized the need to project an image of a strong Luftwaffe, first as a risk air force to cover rearmament, then as a strategic air force to intimidate Great Britain and France. They knew that the Luftwaffe lacked the training and equipment necessary to conduct a strategic bombing campaign against Britain. While not considering war with Britain a real possibility, they nevertheless felt that they

needed a force sufficient to deter outside intervention in the German expansion eastward. The British declaration of war on 3 September 1939 caught not only Hitler but also the Luftwaffe by surprise. Even in war, the deception continued to work. Germany, not France or Britain, ended the "phony war" in May 1940.

Few countries in modern times have attempted to coordinate images of their military strength with their foreign policies. The simple novelty of the Nazi approach--a style apparently not seen in Europe since Renaissance Italy--helped in confusing the British who saw "no likely motive" for the Germans deliberately to manipulate the perceived size of their forces. Principles that derive from the German experience to manipulate perceptions of their military capability include: allow opponents to produce the basis for deceptions; reinforce and exploit preconceptions of the victim; stage demonstrations; adopt shallow but broad rearmament to tout expansion, narrow but deep to disguise expansion; exploit procedural uncertainties in intelligence operations; conjure secret weapons; target "sympathetic groups" when dealing with democratic systems; and structure and time deceptions to accommodate the political processes of the victim.

Military capabilities often supply raw material for attempts to manipulate perceptions of intentions. The image that a country projects of its military forces heavily influences how others interpret its intentions. Lessons from the German experience in the 1930s include: act suddenly and swiftly when the opportunity presents itself; present the world with *faits accomplis*; always leave an exit; espouse only "reasonable" objectives; always play the role of the aggrieved party; set the agenda or better yet have others set the agenda; launch peace initiatives to disguise expansionist objectives and to undermine the defensive actions of the victim; fabricate pretexts and uphold the letter of the law; leave intentions unclear until the last minute but prepare for all contingencies; and discredit those who predict accurately.

As Hitler acknowledged in private conversation, cunning and deceit will not work indefinitely. Eventually other countries will cease to believe the proclamations. Machiavelli argued that a country

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should use deception only until it had gained a position of power. Exaggeration can stimulate opponents to rearm against the supposed and not the real threat. Victims may call bluffs. Deception can fool one's own people. Discovery can lead to a loss of credibility as the Czechs discovered in the May crisis.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This study assesses whether the Germans engaged in strategic deception in the 1930s, and describes and documents their methods, organization, and objectives. Examining German deception should provide insights into how countries can use deception to further goals in peacetime.

The 1930s remains one of the major analogies that has animated the Western psyche since the Second World War--Munich. Any attempts to cooperate with the Soviets raises cries of appeasement--that once honorable but now debased term. Echoes of many current issues found expression in the 1930s: parity and measures of equivalence; deterrence by denial versus deterrence by punishment; the "knockout blow" and the disarming first strike; the rapid pace of technological obsolescence; the apparently asymmetric constraints on the defense economics of a democratic and a totalitarian regime; and strategic deception, the political consequences of the image of military power.

Strategic deception occurs when a country uses deception to further its long-range political goals. A country that lacks a political strategy cannot engage in strategic deception. A country need not develop a plan for its deception nor explicitly establish an organization for coordinating them in order to use them strategically. Deceptions like war remain instruments in the service of policy. To determine whether the Germans engaged in strategic deception requires first that we identify whether they pursued a long-range policy and then to match deceptions to that policy.

The literature on deception and surprise in war provides the context for any study of deception in peacetime. Lessons learned in war can be practiced in peace. The raw material of deception in war--disguising the size and disposition of military forces, fabricating dummy weapons and creating the impression of actions where none will occur--can also be used in peace. But the literature on deception in war focuses on surprise and ignores deterrence. Deception in peace may deter war as much as it can contribute to success in war once

started. To find a systematic study of the role of deception in peacetime requires that we turn to ancient and medieval sources. Deception has not been the province of "gentlemen" who conduct foreign policy in modern times.

The large and varied literature on Hitler's and German foreign policy in the 1930s provides the raw material for identifying and developing a narrative on German deception. Matching these deceptions with German policy provides a context for assessing the extent and efficacy of German strategic deception.

Section II describes the literature on deception in war and examines the classical treatments of deception by Clausewitz, Machiavelli and Sun Tzu. Although countries have occasionally exploited favorable circumstances to mislead opponents about their intentions, strategic deception has occurred only rarely. Countries will occasionally use deceptions to serve operational objectives; few have systematically pursued a program to coordinate the image of their military forces with their long-range political objectives. To practice strategic deception a country must have a strategy. Although some have viewed Hitler as a simple opportunist, he sketched a program for expansion in the 1920s, the general outlines of which he attempted to fulfill in the 1930s. Hitler's policy centered on Great Britain; he believed that he could secure British acquiescence in his policy to expand in the East. Hitler used diplomacy to cover the clandestine rearmament begun under the Weimar Republic. After 1935, Hitler exaggerated German capability to deter foreign intervention in his policy of expansion.

Section III traces the role of deception in Hitler's policy and focuses on the relationship between Germany and Great Britain. The fears surrounding strategic bombing made the Luftwaffe a natural instrument of deception.

Section IV focuses on the method and organization of German deception. Hitler would often resort to threats without any knowledge about whether the Luftwaffe could carry them out. The military effectiveness of the Luftwaffe mattered less to Hitler than its political utility as a club. Hitler succeeded in part because he successfully

projected an image of himself as pursuing the limited objectives of a "traditional" German statesman. The Germans did not create the fear of strategic bombing, they merely had to exploit it to intimidate Europe.

Section V extracts principles of deception from German and European practice in the 1930s.

II. STRATEGIC DECEPTION AND GERMAN LONG-RANGE OBJECTIVES IN THE 1930s

The role that strategic deception plays in foreign policy has not received much attention.¹ Discussions of deception have generally ignored its peacetime applications and focused instead on its role in warfare or in achieving strategic surprise.² As Whaley has noted, even discussions of strategic surprise have often downplayed deception and emphasized instead the intelligence problem of divining the intentions of the adversary in the face of limited and contradictory information.³ Soviet and Eastern European disinformation campaigns have animated many of the accounts of peacetime intelligence operations where tactical deceptions enter as an aside.⁴ This lack of a relevant literature and theory complicates the task of identifying deception activities as strategic.

German foreign policy in the 1930s must provide the context for interpreting any deception that the Germans perpetuated. If the Germans did not pursue an overall strategy but merely reacted to events then their deceptions served operational but not strategic purposes.⁵ An overall plan of some kind must have informed German foreign policy in order for them to engage in strategic deception.

¹Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J., 1970), and Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J., 1976) are significant exceptions.

²Barton Whaley, *Stratagem: Deception and Surprise in War* (MIT Center for International Studies, C-69-9: Cambridge, Ma., 1969).

³Barton Whaley, *Codeword Barbarossa* (MIT Press: Cambridge, Ma., 1973); Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, Ca., 1962).

⁴See, for instance, John Barron, *KGB: The Secret Work of Soviet Secret Agents* (Bantam: New York, 1974).

⁵I have adopted the German and Soviet style of distinguishing among tactics, operational art and strategy. Operational art "determines methods of preparing for and conducting operations to achieve strategic goals."

DECEPTION

A deception attempts to deliberately mislead an adversary regarding intentions and capabilities or to otherwise manipulate him through falsehood. Deception can facilitate surprise but it can also confuse an adversary about military capabilities or threats posed by other countries. Deception can aid in deterrence. In fact deception can serve any objectives that operate on the perceptions of an opponent.

Stratagem in War

Whaley has attempted to sketch a theory of stratagem that focuses primarily on surprise and in fact argues that "the purpose or goal of stratagem is to ensure that the victim be surprised."¹ By focusing on surprise, Whaley ignores the other purposes of deception and makes the common mistake of considering things that happen, such as battles, and not things that do not happen, such as battles forgone. Avoiding a battle when weak by feigning strength may serve strategic purposes just as well as risking battle and compensating for weakness by surprise. Unfortunately, military history generally treats campaigns fought, not unfought.

To appreciate the role of deception requires placing it within the context of an overall military theory that provides instructions (and hope) for the weak as well as the strong.² Sun Tzu, the Chinese equivalent of Clausewitz, argued:

All warfare is based on deception. Therefore, when capable, feign incapacity; when active, inactivity. When near, make it appear that you are far away; when far away, that you are near. Offer the enemy a bait to lure him; feign disorder and strike him. When he concentrates, prepare against him; where he is strong, avoid him. Anger his general and confuse him. Pretend inferiority and encourage his arrogance.

¹Whaley, *Stratagem*, p. 139.

²Clausewitz provides little solace for the weak. Unfortunately, neither does FM 100-5.

Keep him under strain and wear him down. When he is united, divide him. Attack where he is unprepared; sally out when he does not expect you. These are the strategist's keys to victory.¹

Sun Tzu embedded these precepts within a general theory of offensive strategy:

Generally in war the best policy is to take a state intact; to ruin it is inferior to this. To capture the enemy's army is better than to destroy it...For to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill. Thus what is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy's strategy; next best is to disrupt his alliances; the next best is to attack his army...Thus, those skilled in war subdue the enemy's army without battle. They capture his cities without assaulting them and overthrow his state without protracted operations. Your aim must be to take All-under-Heaven intact. Thus your troops are not worn out and your gains will be complete. This is the art of offensive strategy.²

Sun Tzu argued, essentially, that "war is a continuation of policies by other means" and felt that violence represented the last recourse in pursuing those policies. Actual fighting should occur only as needed to achieve strategic objectives. Deception would aim to assure that only necessary fighting occurred and then it would increase the likelihood of favorable outcome.

Clausewitz felt speed critical to achieving surprise and thus believed strategic (as opposed to tactical) surprise unlikely and that deception (or as he styled it, "cunning") had little utility for strategy:

The two factors that produce surprise are secrecy and speed...while the wish to achieve surprise is common and, indeed, indispensable, and while it is equally true that it will never be completely ineffective, it is equally true that by its very nature surprise can rarely be *outstandingly* successful... The principle is highly attractive in theory, but in practice it is often held up by the friction of the whole machine.

¹Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, translated by Samuel B. Griffith (Oxford University Press: New York, 1963), pp. 66-70.

²Ibid., pp. 77-79.

Basically surprise is a tactical device, simply because in tactics time and space are limited in scale. Therefore in strategy surprise becomes more feasible the closer it occurs to the tactical realm, and more difficult, the more it approaches the higher levels of strategy.¹

Clausewitz felt that the necessary preparations for strategic surprise took too long and clearly telegraphed intentions. His reading of recent military history led him to conclude that surprise gained little. Clausewitz dated himself with the argument that "the strategist's chessmen do not have the kind of mobility that is essential for stratagem and cunning."² In his historical examples Clausewitz confused hasty and inadequate preparations with surprise. This confusion carried over into his discussion of "cunning" or deception.

Clausewitz believed that efforts expended to deceive the enemy could more profitably be used directly. Clausewitz lost sight of the political objectives of war and focused too much on the engagement, the battle. Such an emphasis leaves Clausewitz with too narrow a definition of strategy and an inadequate appreciation of deception:

Strategy is exclusively concerned with engagements and the direction relating to them. Unlike other areas of life it is not concerned with actions that consist only of words...But words, being cheap, are the most common means of creating false impressions.

Analogous things in war--plans and orders issued for appearances only, false reports designed to confuse the enemy, etc.--have as a rule so little strategic value that they are used only if a ready-made opportunity presents itself.³

Nevertheless, Clausewitz appreciated the theoretical attractiveness of deception as he does surprise:

If we...consider strategy as the art of skillfully exploiting force for a larger purpose...no human characteristic appears so suited to the task of directing and inspiring strategy as the gift of

¹Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J., 1976), p. 198. Emphasis in text.

²Ibid., p. 203.

³Ibid., p. 202-3.

cunning. The universal urge to surprise...already points to this conclusion: since each surprise action is rooted in at least some degree of cunning.¹

By arguing that cunning may serve as the last resort of the desperate and weak, Clausewitz betrayed his lack of sympathy for the weak. "The best strategy is always to be *very strong*; first in general, and then at the decisive point."²

Whaley illustrates how deception and surprise yield tangible benefits in war. The ratio of casualties between the initiator and the target of a military actions provides one measure of advantage as seen in Table 1. The cases represent a sample of 124 battles between 1914-1967. Whaley includes all cases he thought exemplified strategic deception but made no attempt to systematically collect cases of tactical deception or cases characterized by no deception.

Whaley believes that deception furthers surprise and believes that Table 1 supports his argument. He fails to consider whether deception acts to achieve effects that differ from simple surprise. A country may react to deception by placing its forces in a more vulnerable position than it would otherwise. The deceiver would have expected this maldeployment and have made preparations to exploit it. Had the initiator simply surprised his target out of position, he would not necessarily possess the will or the capability to seize upon his good fortune. Deception may succeed because the initiator has prepared himself to exploit surprise not because it makes surprise more intense.

Table 1
The Effect of Surprise and Deception on Casualties, 1914-1967

	No. Cases	Average Casualty Ratio
Surprise with Deception	59	1:6.3
Surprise without Deception	20	1:2.0
No Surprise with Deception	5	1:1.3
No Surprise without Deception	40	1:1.1
	124	

SOURCE: Whaley, *Stratagem*, p. 195.

¹Ibid., p. 202.

²Ibid., p. 204.

Examples of strategic rather than tactical surprise more nearly resemble situations that would occur in peacetime. Techniques used to further strategic surprise may also apply when a country uses deception to achieve *faits accomplis* in peacetime. Table 2, from Whaley, distinguishes among place, time, strength, intention, and style as modes of surprise. Place refers to confusion over the area threatened or the direction of attack. Time represents ambiguity over the time of attack. Strength denotes uncertainty over the strength of military forces committed to an operation. Intention reflects confusion over whether an operation will occur at all. Style includes surprise regarding the form of the military operation. The adversary may use a new weapon such as the tank at Cambrai, or new tactics, such as the German use of infiltration tactics in their 1918 spring offensive. Each of these modes corresponds to ways in which countries can perpetrate deceptions in peacetime.

Not surprisingly, examples of strategic surprise differ from tactical primarily in the frequency of intention as a mode of surprise. In peace, a country may doubt whether an attack will occur. In war, a country expects attack but may fail to anticipate his strength or location.

Table 2
How Surprise Occurs in War

<u>Mode of Surprise</u>	<u>Percentage of Cases</u>	
	<u>Strategic</u>	<u>Tactical</u>
Place	75	69
Time	73	56
Strength	60	53
Intention	46	16
Style	25	27
Number of Cases	(63)	(45)

SOURCE: Whaley, *Stratagem*, p. 215.

An examination of the techniques used to conduct deception reveals the greater importance of disinformation in strategic deception. As illustrated in Table 3, only camouflage appears almost as often in tactical as in strategic deception. The longer time available and the greater importance of strategic situations seem to contribute to a greater variety of and more numerous techniques to further deception.

Table 3
Strategic and Tactical Forms of Deception

<u>Type of Deception</u>	<u>Percent of Cases</u>	
	<u>Strategic</u>	<u>Tactical</u>
<u>Maskirovka</u> ^a		
Feints (deployments simulating an imminent attack)	51	38
Dissimulative camouflage (concealed installations)	46	40
Simulative camouflage (dummy installations)	51	26
Demonstrations (diversionary attacks)	41	24
<u>Disinformation</u>		
Rumors (deliberately planted)	40	11
Radio (deceptive traffic)	35	15
Press leaks (including public announcements)	32	0
Negotiations	21	2
Fake documents	10	4
<u>Other</u>	19	13
<u>Number of Cases</u>	(63)	(45)

SOURCE: Whaley, *Stratagem*, p. 219.

^aA form of support for combat operations, its purpose being to conceal the activities and disposition of friendly troops, and to mislead the enemy with regard to grouping and intentions of such troops." A.I. Radziyevskiy, *Dictionary of Basic Military Terms* (GPO: Washington, D.C., n.d.; original edition: Moscow, 1965), p. 118.

Liddell Hart's concept of "alternative objectives" embedded in his theory of the "indirect approach" guides Whaley's theorizing on stratagem.¹ Deception, in Whaley's view, relies on the simulation of alternatives to the actual operation. The victim has two (or more) alternatives from which to choose and deception guides his choice to the wrong one. The deceiver may fabricate the alternatives. Often, the deceiver will not need to fabricate any alternatives but simply can play to the predispositions or hypothetical alternatives of his victim. The deceiver then can simply reinforce the victim's predispositions.

The German plan to invade Britain, Operation Sea Lion, included a deception program *Herbstreise* (Autumn Journey) to convince the British that the main attack would come against the east coast of England and Scotland. The main attack would in fact have come across the channel. The deception plan that the Germans formulated in August 1940 reinforced British perceptions that the attack would come on the east coast.² In fact, as late as 7 September, British intelligence discounted the buildup along the channel as a decoy. Churchill eventually divined the threat and redeployed his forces. By then, Hitler had canceled Sea Lion but now resurrected it as Operation Shark, the cover and deception operation for Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union. The Germans even attempted to pass off preparations for Barbarossa as a deception operation for Sea Lion.³

The German plan exemplifies the alternative objectives approach. The Germans wanted to confuse the British about the direction of attack just as the allies would succeed in convincing the Germans that the invasion of France would occur at Calais and not on the beaches of Normandy. As a strategy for successful deception, alternative objectives only applies at best to those circumstances under which a country intends to launch an attack. Deceptions to further deterrence do not fall easily within the approach.

¹Whaley, *Stratagem*, pp. 127-151; Basil Liddell Hart, *The Strategy of the Indirect Approach* (Signet: New York, 1974, 2nd rev. ed.).

²Edmund Ironside, *The Ironside Diaries, 1937-1940*, ed. by Roderick Macleod and Denis Kelly (Constable: London, 1962), pp. 378-386.

³Whaley, *Barbarossa*, pp. 170-185.

The emphasis on surprise has led to a major oversight in the study of deception in war. Often to avoid attack matters just as much as ability to perpetrate surprise. In the movie *Beau Geste*, the survivors created the illusion of greater strength when they propped up corpses to deter a final Arab assault on the fort. Deception in peace may deter war just as deception in war may deter attack.

The discussion of deception in war seems to apply primarily for achieving *faits accomplis* in peace. Masking intent through deception, whether by using disinformation or maskirovka, would seem best for launching surprise initiatives or presenting opponents with situations that they would find difficult to overturn. The literature on deception in war provides a partial guide for examining deception in peace.

Stratagem in Peace

Deception often played as unheralded a role in foreign policy as it has in war. For the ancients, cunning represented an admirable trait. Treachery and deceit often characterized relations among the Italian city states but the extent of duplicity moved even Machiavelli to comment:

Although deceit is detestable in all other things, yet in the conduct of war it is laudable and honorable; and a commander who vanquishes an enemy by stratagem is equally praised with one who gains victory by force.¹

Despite his apparent moral qualms, Machiavelli did view deception as playing a prominent role in foreign as well as domestic politics. Because Hitler styled himself a student of Machiavelli, the *Discourses* and the *Prince* provide insights not only into the proper circumstances within which to use deception but also into the basis of Hitler's tactics.²

¹Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince and the Discourses* (Modern Library: New York, 1950), p. 526.

²Hermann Rauschning, *Voice of Destruction* (G.P. Putnam: New York, 1940), pp. 273-280; Machiavelli, op. cit.

Machiavelli had much more to say about how to gain power for oneself and the state than he did about how to conduct normal diplomatic relations in a stable state system. He argued that deception may provide the weak with the only means by which to succeed:

Nor do I believe that there was ever a man who from obscure condition arrived at great power by merely employing open force, but there are many who succeeded by fraud alone...We see therefore that the Romans in the early beginning of their power already employed fraud, which it has ever been necessary for those to practice who from small beginnings wish to rise to the highest degree of power; and then it is the less censurable the more it is concealed...¹

The use of the Romans as an example of model behavior exposes Machiavelli's intent--to suggest techniques for gaining power as rapidly as possible. Deceit and cunning play an important role but only during the early stages of aggrandizement; having attained power, force alone will suffice.²

Machiavelli provided a program for using deceit as an aid in the quest for empire that resembles Hitler's own progress in the 1930s:

...it is most certain that when a prince or a people attain that degree of reputation that all neighboring princes fear to attack him, none of them will ever venture to do it except under force of necessity; so that it will be, as it were, at the option of that potent prince or people to make war upon such neighboring powers as may seem advantageous, whilst adroitly keeping the others quiet. And this he can easily do, partly by the respect they have for his power, and partly because they are deceived by means to keep them quiet. And other powers that are more distant and have no immediate intercourse with him will look upon this as a matter too remote to be concerned about, and will continue in this error until the conflagration spreads to their door, when they will have no means for extinguishing it except their own forces, which will no longer suffice when the fire has gained the upper hand.³

¹ Machiavelli, op. cit., pp. 319-320.

² Ibid., p. 319.

³ Ibid., p. 279.

Although Machiavelli did not emphasize the advantage of surprise he did argue that the Romans succeeded in their conquests because they made their wars "short and sharp."¹ Prolonged wars would merely devastate the territory over which the fighting occurred, decrease its value, and weaken the victor. The success of the overall program of expansion depended on the speedy resolution of each war to provide the territorial basis for fighting the next war, a program that Hitler also adopted.

In war stratagem would play a major role:

A good general, then, has to do two things; the one, to try by novel stratagems to create alarm amongst the enemy; and the other, to be on his guard to discover those that the enemy may attempt to practice upon him, and to render them fruitless.²

Machiavelli would agree with Sun Tzu that fraud better than force achieves objectives in war. Machiavelli apparently commended one of his contemporaries noted for his duplicity:

If he was able to win by fraud he never attempted to win by force, because he said that victory, not the method of gaining it, brought glory to the victor.³

Machiavelli thus emplaced deception within a general program for the aggrandizement of the state.

A country's strategy for conducting foreign policy, if it has one at all, provides the context for interpreting deception. Although deception need not derive from aggressive motives, it always serves some purpose. Intent to mislead marks deception and distinguishes it from historical accidents.

¹Ibid., p. 299.

²Ibid., p. 459.

³Quoted in Felix Gilbert, "Machiavelli: The Renaissance of the Art of War," in Edward Meade Merle (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy* (Atheneum: New York, 1970), p. 14.

"Natural" Deceptions. Deception succeeds best when the victim is certain but wrong about the capabilities or intentions of the deceiver. Actions that initially did not constitute a deception form the basis for "natural" deceptions. Either the victim can verify parts of the action as true or the deceiver has changed his intent while not disavowing an action that communicated a different intent. Thus, the deceiver may need to do nothing about the victim's initial hypothesis, especially when the victim articulates an interpretation that varies with the deceiver's true intent.

In the years preceding the First World War, France wished to confuse the Germans over French relations with Italy. As a member of the Triple Alliance, Italy was committed to aid the Germans. In 1902 the French concluded a pact with Italy that promised its neutrality in a Franco-German war. Despite this pact, the French government continued to maintain an army corps along the Alps, in part to convince the Germans that Franco-Italian relations had not changed. When the French army first learned of the pact in 1909, they moved the troops. The French army must have felt that the advantages gained by keeping the Germans in the dark about the true state of Franco-Italian relations came at too high a military cost.¹

Deceptions also occur when the deceiver alters something that has occurred or is in the process of occurring. To induce France to attack Germany prior to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 Bismarck edited the "Ems" telegram. The French had made some demands. The Prussian king, William, while refusing, had also attempted to conciliate the French. Bismarck deleted the conciliatory parts of the telegram when he published it.²

During the 1930s, the German Propaganda Ministry perpetrated deceptions with the complicity of the aircraft manufacturers. Messerschmitt and Heinkel competed for the fighter aircraft contracts. Messerschmitt won the first round, the Luftwaffe choosing the Bf-109 as the standard fighter over Heinkel's He-112. For the next round, Messerschmitt developed the Me-209 and Heinkel the He-100 which the

¹Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations*, p. 54.

²A.J.P. Taylor, *Bismarck* (Vintage: New York, 1967), pp. 120-1.

Propaganda Ministry designated as the Bf-109R and He-112U respectively when they became involved in the pursuit of speed records.¹ Heinkel apparently acquiesced in this deception in part to further his chances of exporting He-112s.²

"Natural" deceptions have an advantage over total fabrications by starting out as true. The victim can verify parts of the deceptive activity as true. The Germans could see the French army corps stationed along the Italian border in 1907 and presumed that Franco-Italian interests remained incompatible. King William did send the Ems telegram with the words attributed to him. As A.J.P. Taylor cleverly says, "This was no forgery; it was a clear statement of the facts."³ The Germans had in fact intended to invade Britain with Sea Lion. Any attempt to discredit each of these deceptions must confront its truthful elements. A natural deception possesses the advantage of always remaining a viable contingency that the victim must consider in assessing the deceiver's intent.⁴

"Natural" deceptions also reflect the predilections of deceiver. In order to exploit opportunities for deception as they arise, a country must have a plan or a strategy which the deception will serve. "Natural" deceptions generally serve operational or strategic objectives and probably reflect only part of a deception program.

Tactical Deceptions. In foreign policy, tactical deceptions generally form part of the campaign against a particular country. For example, Goebbels had the *Völkischer Beobachter* publish a report on 13 June 1941 in which he disclosed that Germany would soon invade England. He had the police remove the edition of the paper from circulation as soon as it had reached foreign correspondent. To crown this deception, Goebbels then had the foreign correspondents apprised

¹ See Sec. III for greater details.

² William Green, *Warplanes of the Third Reich* (Doubleday: Garden City, N.Y., 1970), p. 333.

³ Taylor, op. cit., p. 121.

⁴ A country can of course dismiss the truth as a hoax. The plans for Operation Market Garden fell into German hands but Field Marshal Model, commanding the German force, discounted them as a hoax. Cornelius Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far* (Popular Library: New York, 1974), pp. 248-9.

of his disgrace for this inexcusable leak.¹ This deception formed part of the campaign to use the aborted Operation Sea Lion as the cover for Operation Barbarossa.

Heydrich, head of the Security Service and Intelligence for the SS (the SD), claimed credit for destroying the leadership of the Soviet Army. Heydrich ordered materials from the period of Russo-German collaboration altered to suggest that Marshal Tukhachevsky, the Soviet Deputy Commissar of Defense, had become a Nazi agent. The SD passed these materials to the Czechs who then sent them to Moscow. After a perfunctory court martial Tukhachevsky and other Soviet generals were executed on 11 June 1937. Although Heydrich took credit, the Soviet Security Service, the NKVD--predecessor of the KGB--had instigated the entire affair.²

To justify his actions, Heydrich allegedly asserted to Canaris, head of German Military Intelligence--the Abwehr:

The idea came down from the Führer himself. The Russian armed forces had to be decimated at the top and weakened in consequence. The whole thing is a gambit on the Führer's part--it fits into his overall plan for the next few years.³

Hitler's complicity in Tukhachevsky's death remains uncertain. A NKVD-SD double agent had initially provided the information that Tukhachevsky was plotting a preventive war against Germany.⁴ After the 20 July 1944 assassination attempt Hitler referred to the Tukhachevsky affair in a way that suggests he did not authorize Heydrich's action:

Today [Hitler] had realized, he said, that in trying Tukhachevsky, Stalin had taken a decisive step toward successful conduct of the war. By liquidating his General Staff, Stalin had made room for

¹Whaley, op. cit., pp. 173-4. Goebbels used this ploy on other occasions; see Ernest K. Bramsted, *Goebbels and Nationalist Socialist Propaganda* (Michigan State University Press: East Lansing, Michigan, 1965), p. 142.

²Heinz Höhne, *Canaris* (Doubleday: Garden City, N.Y., 1979), pp. 248-250; Victor Alexandrov, *The Tukhachevsky Affair* (Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1963).

³Höhne, op. cit., p. 249.

⁴Alexandrov, op. cit., p. 88.

fresh, vigorous men who did not date back to Tzarist days. He had always thought the charges in the 1937 Moscow trials were trumped up, he said; but now after the experience of July 20 he wondered whether there might not have been something to them. He still had no more evidence than before, Hitler continued, but he could no longer exclude the possibility of treasonous collaboration between the Russian and German General Staffs.¹

Whatever Hitler's complicity, the Tukhachevsky affair illustrates several problems of interpreting individual tactical deceptions. An isolated deception may not fit into an operational design and may occur without the explicit authorization of a country's leadership. The Tukhachevsky affair resulted apparently from the designs of the NKVD and not Hitler. The forgeries occurred outside Abwehr channels and the Germans did not sustain the attack on the Soviet generals. The Tukhachevsky affair reveals the beginnings of competition between the SD and the Abwehr, the agency within the War Ministry with the responsibility for intelligence, counterespionage and deception.² Such a competition can easily yield independent opportunistic deceptions that bear little relationship to overall strategic policy.³

The "secret weapon" deception may also serve no specific strategic objective other than to destroy the confidence of the adversary. Some of the propaganda may simply reflect the desire to impress the domestic front or to gain advantage in internal bureaucratic competition as when Heinkel allowed his He-100 to be disguised as an He-112. Apparently, the German dive bomber, the Ju-87 Stuka, benefited from a secret weapon campaign.⁴ Secret weapon propaganda preceded the appearance of both the V-1 and V-2, even the names of which constituted propaganda. When the V-1 failed to appear on schedule, Goebbels declared in an October 1943 speech:

¹ Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (Macmillan: New York, 1970), p. 390.

² Höhne, op. cit., pp. 249-252.

³ In their war against the Wehrmacht, Himmler and Heydrich fabricated evidence which led to the downfall of the Army commander-in-chief. David Irving, *The War Path* (Viking: New York, 1978), pp. 3-20.

⁴ H.J.A. Wilson, "The Luftwaffe as a Political Instrument," *Aeronautics*, October 1944, p. 37.

As regards the theme of '*Vergeltung*' discussed by the entire German people with such hot passion, I can for obvious reasons only say that the English commit an extraordinarily fateful error if they believe it was a mere rhetorical or propagandist slogan without any reality behind it. England will come to know this reality one day.¹

Propaganda and deception to intimidate an adversary in peacetime must confront the hard rock of reality in war. The Germans did not launch their first V-1 against England until June 1944. The naming of these weapons, V for *Vergeltung* (Retaliation) and their numbering, V-1, V-2 etc., suggested further development and production of additional and even more ominous weapons of mass destruction.² Goebbels had lost prestige from pushing the secret weapon too early and he admitted the worry that "the silk cord to which retaliation was attached up to the last might break."³ Secret weapon propaganda does not have to meet the test of combat in peace and succeeds in diverting scientific opinion to ascertain its feasibility. In war, the secret weapon has to perform.

Operational Deceptions. The use of deception to further an operational objective has appeared both to surprise the opponent or to control or deter his actions. The Soviets view operational deception as a major means of achieving surprise.

operativnaya maskirovka--a type of support for combat operations, conducted for the purpose of misleading the enemy concerning the true nature of the forthcoming operations of friendly troops, the concept of the operation, the scale, the time, and the targets against which the enemy may possibly use weapons of mass destruction. Operational camouflage is one of the principal means of achieving operational surprise. The methods of effecting operational camouflage are diversified. They include creation of dummy groupings and objects; misinforming the enemy; wide use of technical camouflaging facilities; utilization of advantageous terrain features and darkness;

¹Bramsted, op. ci., p. 318. Emphasis in text.

²Ibid., p. 321.

³Ibid.

taking steps to safeguard military security and adopting covert control of troops, etc. Operational camouflage is effected in accordance with a unified plan formulated by the staff of a major field force.¹

An operational deception requires planning. Isolated deceptions or apparently innocent activities gain meaning only with relationship to the plan.

The May crisis of 1938 has the markings of an opportunistic Czech operational deception to emphasize the German threat and secure British and French support. The Germans had initiated a deception campaign against Austria to feign a possible military attack in February 1938. The *Anschluss* which followed in March 1938 seemingly gave lie to the earlier deception and certainly made Europe sensitive to the possibility of the Germans taking over Czechoslovakia. By 19 May 1938 both the Czech and British intelligence had received reports that General Reichenau was assembling four motorized divisions to attack Bohemia. The German press apparently reported troop movements in Germany on 19 May 1938. Reports from British, Czech and French consuls in Saxony mentioned ominous German troop movements.

On 20 May 1938, President Beneš of Czechoslovakia ordered a partial mobilization. On 20 May 1938, Weizäcker, the German State Secretary at the Foreign Ministry reported that Mastny, the Czech ambassador, had claimed that

troops had allegedly been moved toward the frontier in Silesia and northern Austria as well, and that orders were said to have been given for the SA and the SS to hold themselves in readiness on May 21 and 22.²

Both Weizäcker and the German ambassador to Czechoslovakia, Eisenlohr, requested verification of the troop reports and discovered no unusual concentrations.³

¹A.I. Radzievskiy, op. cit., p. 141.

²*Documents on German Foreign Policy (DGFP)*, Series D, II (GPO: Washington, D.C., various years), pp. 295, 307-8.

³*Ibid.*, p. 296-8.

On the evening of 20 May 1938, Ribbentrop reproached Mastny:

It had further come to my notice that rumors were being circulated in Prague that Germany was assembling troops on the frontier and that units of SS and SA were being stationed in readiness. As there was not a word of truth in this and as it was only from Prague that such rumors were disseminated, the suspicion could not fail to be aroused among us that the Czechoslovak Government was planning some measures of this kind and was trying to provide itself with an excuse by means of such rumors. If the existence of such tactics were to be confirmed, they could only have one result with the German Government, namely that these troop concentrations, which Prague seemed not to desire, would take place with lightning speed.¹

The Czechs insisted that the British military attaché in Berlin had provided them with the reports, a claim that he later denied. Eisenlohr speculated that Beneš was "partly the victim of a deception," and that

if...the British military attaché in Berlin believed his reports of a German strategic concentration and attached such importance to them, these reports must have sounded very definite, and one wonders who supplied them. Perhaps the supposition is justified, that an interested third party fabricates such reports and plays them into the hands of military agents in order to let loose a disaster.²

The British military attaché, Mason-MacFarlane, toured the Czech-German border on 22 May 1938 and failed to verify the German troop movements. Although Braddick argues that the British Secret Service may have initially supplied the report, the evidence points towards the Czechs seizing on favorable circumstances to launch the entire episode.

The then British military attaché in Prague, Stronge, later commented:

As soon as the May crisis arose...I was asked by Colonel Hajek, the Chief of Intelligence of the Czech Army, to go and see him. On arrival, he informed me that he had just received reliable and detailed reports of German troop concentrations in various areas beyond the Northern frontier with Germany, and proceeded to indicate on a large wall map

¹Ibid., p. 298.

²Ibid., p. 342.

exactly where various German formations were said to be. The situation certainly looked rather threatening, and as I knew his intelligence organization in Germany to be both extensive and efficient there was no immediate reason for doubting the broad truth of what I had been told. It was, however, only a day or two later that reports coming from our Military attaché in Berlin and from various other sources in Czechoslovakia made me begin to doubt Colonel Hajek's statement. I visited him almost daily for a period thereafter and soon became convinced from his manner and his answers to searching questions on my part that he was not speaking the truth. Subsequent events made it plain beyond doubt that this was a trumped-up scare, deliberately created by the Czech authorities for their own purposes. By this manoeuvre they spoilt an otherwise fairly clean record.¹

Strong thought that Hajek had instigated the whole affair.² Other theories point to the Germans themselves as starting the crisis, either as a means by German dissidents to embarrass Hitler or as attempts by Hitler to test European reactions.³ Nevertheless, the evidence points at the Czechs.

The May crisis illustrates the difficulty of identifying the initial source of a deception. Reports of German troop movements appeared that both the French and British military attachés quickly verified as false. The Czechs sustained the image of a threatening Germany. On 25 May, the Czechs informed the American military attaché that about sixteen divisions were primed to strike on short notice. Even if the Czechs did not start the crisis, they surely exploited it.

A similar crisis erupted in March 1939 and led to the British guarantee of Poland. On 15 March, German troops entered the rump state of "Czechia." On 20 March, Ribbentrop informed the Lithuanian Foreign Minister that "the Memel territory wished to return to Germany."⁴ On 22 March the Lithuanians returned Memel to Germany. Rumors appeared

¹Henderson B. Braddick, *Germany, Czechoslovakia, and the Grand Alliance in the May Crisis, 1938* (The Social Science Foundation and Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver: Denver, 1969), p. 26.

²Ibid., p. 27 fn.

³Ibid., pp. 37-9. The head of the German Abwehr did plant some stories in 1939 to stimulate British reaction.

⁴DGFP, D, V, p. 524.

from Hungary and Romania that the Germans were on the move again.¹ On 20 March, the British ambassador in Warsaw sought confirmation regarding German military activity in East Prussia. Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, stated that he thought the Germans were applying pressure on Lithuania not Danzig.² On 23 March, Chamberlain received word that "the Germans have mobilized twenty divisions on the western frontier."³ Apparently started by the Poles, rumors now pointed towards the Polish border.⁴ On 23 March, Warsaw called up the reservists in the 1911-1914 age groups and doubled the army's peacetime strength. On 24 March 1939, the British ambassador to Warsaw reported "three days of very thorough A.R.P. [Air Raid Precautions] blackouts in Warsaw."⁵ On 29 March, Chamberlain met with Halifax, Cadogan, and a journalist who had received information from dissident German generals. Chamberlain wrote to his sister:

Hitler had everything ready for a swoop on Poland which he had planned to split up between annexation and protectorate. This would be followed by absorption of Lithuania and then other states would be easy prey. After that would come the possibility of a Russo-German alliance and finally the British Empire, the ultimate goal, would fall hopelessly into the German maw.⁶

After securing corroboration, Chamberlain feared "that we might wake up on Sunday or Monday morning to find Poland surrendering to an ultimatum."⁷ On 30 March, Chamberlain offered Poland an interim and unilateral guarantee. Beck accepted.

The events preceding the British guarantee smack of a Polish operational deception but unlike the May crisis very little hard evidence implicates the Poles. Rumors of a German move on Poland had

¹*Documents on British Foreign Policy (DBFP)*, Series 3, IV (HMSO: London, various years), pp. 457, 465.

²*Ibid.*, p. 398.

³Roy Douglas, *In the Year of Munich* (St. Martin's Press: New York, 1977), p. 122.

⁴A.J.P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (Fawcett: New York, 1961), p. 204.

⁵DBFP, 3, IV, p. 497.

⁶Chamberlain as quoted in Douglas, op. cit., p. 123.

⁷*Ibid.*

apparently originated among German dissidents surrounding General Beck. Rumors seized many capitals. On 22 March, Romania feared a Hungarian attack and found 25 German divisions massing on their border and Bulgarians moving on the Dobrudja.¹ These rumors proved unfounded. Nevertheless, Beck did mobilize the army even though he held Hitler in contempt.² Beck did mislead the British regarding German demands as the British Foreign Office, after bemoaning that the Poles showed "a most remarkable disinclination to tell us the truth," commented on 4 May:

at the time of the announcement of our guarantee... we merely knew that...the German Government had communicated desiderata regarding the return of Danzig, a motor road across the Corridor, and cooperation against Russia. We had no knowledge of the so-called concessions which had accompanied these desiderata.³

The Poles had motive and opportunity and inclination to deceive. The Polish March crisis resembles the Czech May crisis enough to suggest two attempts to deceive the Western powers into a commitment.

Both the Polish and Czech cases suggest opportunistic actions to exploit favorable circumstances. Both operational deceptions served strategic objectives. Questionable aspects of both cases as they became revealed undermined the support each country had gained from the results of deception. The apparent isolated occurrence of both these deceptions suggests that they were not part of a program for strategic deception.

Strategic Deception. Strategic deception results from a series of deceptions designed to influence substantially adversaries' (and potential allies') perceptions of capabilities and intentions in such a way as to further strategic objectives. A country need not formulate an explicit plan for deceptions any more than it would articulate a program for a succession of diplomatic initiatives. To succeed, a deception must rely on circumstances that the deceiver can not often

¹DBFP, 3, IV, p. 433.

²Christopher Thorne, *The Approach of War, 1938-1939* (Macmillan: London, 1967), p. 128.

³Ibid. p. 126.

anticipate. Nevertheless, an inclination to fabricate crises or guide events to favor deception would certainly mark strategic deception. A strategy or plan for foreign policy must provide the context in order for individual deceptions to become strategic. Without a plan, deceptions, however coherent they appear with hindsight, must remain at best operational or tactical.

Controversy surrounds another German, Bismarck, about the extent of his planning and the methods he employed to further his objectives. The participants in this controversy include some, such as A.J.P. Taylor, who have appeared in the debate over Hitler's purposiveness.¹ The debate over the culpability of the appeasers preceding World War II resembles the discussion over German war guilt in World War I.² The debate over Bismarck's methods illustrates some of the problems in identifying strategic deception.

Eyre Crowe offered the thesis in 1907 that Bismarck essentially conducted a campaign of strategic deception. Crowe lists a succession of episodes in which Germany apparently deliberately misled Great Britain:

The peculiar diplomatic methods employed by Bismarck in connection with the first German annexation in South-West Africa, the persistent way in which he deceived up to the last moment as to Germany's colonial ambitions, and then turned around to complain of the want of sympathy shown for Germany's "well-known" policy; the sudden seizure of the Cameroons by a German doctor armed with officially-obtained British letters of recommendation, at a time when the intention of England to grant the native's petition had been proclaimed; the deliberate deception practiced on the Reichstag and the German public by the publication of pretended communications to Lord Granville which were never made...; the hoisting of the German flag over vast parts of New Guinea, immediately after inducing England to postpone her already-announced intention to occupy some of those

¹A.J.P. Taylor, *Bismarck: The Origins of the Second World War*.

²E.M. Robertson (ed.) *The Origins of the Second World War* (Macmillan: London, 1971); H.W. Koch (ed.) *The Origins of the First World War* (Macmillan: London, 1972),

very parts by representing that a friendly settlement might first determine the dividing line of rival territorial claims.¹

Bismarck had certainly shown himself disposed to deception with the editing of the Ems telegram. Crowe's litany indicates a substantial indictment of Bismarck's methods. His behavior suggests another interpretation expressed by Lord Sanderson and summarized as:

The question whether in the period 1880-85, Prince Bismarck was or was not guilty of *deception*, is largely verbal only. A person may enter on a certain course of action and thereby induce a friend to undertake liabilities. He may suddenly enter on an exactly opposite course; disclaim his previous conduct; and leave his friend with the liabilities which the latter has incurred. Or he may be guilty of the false pretense of an existing fact, and thereby fraudulently obtain money.--In both these cases the person may be said to have "deceived." The chief difference is that in one case he would at most have exposed himself to a civil action while in the other he could be criminally prosecuted and convicted. The difference between Mr. Crowe and Lord Sanderson is: that Mr. Crowe thinks Prince Bismarck ought to be prosecuted; while Lord Sanderson thinks he was only civilly liable.²

The ambiguity over Bismarck's intentions and methods springs in part from the largely negative goals he pursued and from his studied opportunism in which he would precipitate a crisis and seize the appropriate moment when it arose. Bismarck wished to achieve German security with a system of alliances among conservative countries directed against subversion.³ He would precipitate crises, such as the 1875 war-insight crisis, with some idea of the goals he wished to achieve but little notion of how he would achieve them.⁴ In the 1884 crisis over South-West Africa, Bismarck had left the German Embassy in London

¹G.P. Gooch and H. Temperley (comps.), *British Documents on the Origins of the War, Volume III. The Testing of the Entente* (HMSO: London, 1928), p. 408.

²Ibid., p. 420.

³Gordon Craig, *Germany 1866-1918* (Oxford University Press: New York, 1978), p. 102.

⁴Ibid., p. 108.

completely uninformed, an unfortunate habit of his whenever he wished to confuse antagonists--and this was probably true in this case--whenever he had not fully made up his mind concerning which way he was going to jump.¹

At other times Bismarck would propose a complicated route. In 1886 he wrote his son that if war came between Austria and Russia, "we could certainly tolerate Austria's losing a battle but not that it should be destroyed or fatally wounded or made a dependency of Russia." Although Austria deserved protection, Germany should not provide too explicit a support because "we would then have no guarantee against Austrian provocations" against Russia.² To show the Austrians the proper amount of support would obviously depend on situations that Bismarck could not fully anticipate. Thus his policy, while remaining constant, could lead to apparently contradictory statements across situations.

Bismarck's policy followed a strategic design and he occasionally practiced deception to further that design. Bismarck did not coordinate these deceptions or even anticipate them. The opportunistic nature of Bismarck's tactics robbed him of any flexible use of others' perceptions of the military thus leaving him only with disinformation as the means of deception. The time needed to conduct maskirovka often requires a commitment to strategic deception that the personalistic use of disinformation does not.

The Crowe-Sanderson debate illustrates the problems that a country may have when it shifts its policy from one of expansionism to maintenance of the status quo. Bismarck had launched a series of wars to establish the German Empire. His subsequent policy centered on consolidating those gains. Yet Bismarck's methods, which relied so heavily on exploiting the propitious moment in a crisis, remained the same. Bismarck's actions often appeared deceptive because he did not know which course he would take. Thus Bismarck's initial objectives and continuing methods led many to consider Germany as expansionist after the Franco-Prussian war. Bismarck pulled up short on the route

¹ Ibid., pp. 120-1.

² Ibid., p. 126.

to a world empire. Understandably, other countries failed to appreciate that Bismarck had limited his objectives to the unification and consolidation of the German nation. "Deceptive" methods suggested a quest for political hegemony over all of Europe.

Deception and the Intelligence Problem

A comprehensive theory of intelligence must deal with deception. A country practices deception in part to fool or neutralize the intelligence operations of its adversaries. A normative theory would prescribe how to recognize and interpret correctly the capabilities and intentions of other states in the face not only of ambiguity but also of deliberate attempts to mislead. A theory of deception would suggest how best to exploit the weaknesses of intelligence operations or how to circumvent or otherwise neutralize them altogether. It matters little that an intelligence operation produces correct and timely information if the government fails to use or act on it. The study of intelligence failure must include successful deception. Unfortunately, no widely accepted normative theory of intelligence guides action and comparative case studies comprise much of the generalizing about how intelligence systems work.¹

Betts has identified three areas which have animated much of the literature on intelligence. Attack warning requires timely indication of the immediate intention of enemies. Operational evaluation provides information of how well one's own forces can and do perform their mission. Defense planning needs estimates of "threats posed by adversaries, in terms of both capabilities and intentions, over a period of several years."² Betts chose these areas because they form, not analytically distinct categories, but a rough division of the literature on intelligence failures. Despite Betts' assertion that the descriptive theory of intelligence is "well-developed," a succession of loosely related studies on intelligence failures do not form a theory of how intelligence systems work. These studies do suggest the circumstances

¹Richard K. Betts, "Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures Are Inevitable," *World Politics*, 31 (1), October 1978.

²*Ibid.*, p. 65.

under which deception should succeed by providing evidence on how bias and pathology appear in intelligence systems. A deception succeeds when intelligence makes the wrong interpretation or the right interpretation which the government then ignores. An understanding of the bias and pathologies that afflict intelligence operations would aid in designing a successful deception. Thus understanding need not derive from any formal theory. The success of Bismarck and Hitler suggests that they possessed a good intuitive sense of how to fool their opponents and friends.

Disguising Strategic Intent: Diplomacy to Avoid the Last War.

The interaction between intelligence assessments and policy provides occasion for bias both in evaluation and interpretation. Error in using intelligence occurs not only because the evidence allows several interpretations but also because the government compensates for bias. The government must reconcile the implications of "worst-case" planning assessments made by the military with other demands on scarce resources. Ambiguity regarding the strategic intent of possible opponents aids the government in discounting the pessimism of the military.

The circumstances that surround the initiation of the last major war also color the interaction between the government and military. If the last war began because the government failed to nip aggression in the bud, the military's claims to greater resources will gain credence. If the last war began because the government overreacted to a perceived threat, then the military's claims will fall on fallow ground. Just as the military plans to fight the last war, diplomats work to prevent it.

The treaty that concludes the last war determines the norms of the peace. A harsh peace will dictate and focus the goals of the losers. Revisionism in its early phases differs very little from aggression. Self-determination as an international norm necessarily leads to revisionism if nations do not coincide with states. A view that great powers possess colonies leads to revisionism by those states that attain great power status after the division of the colonial pie. Norms define "legitimate" grievances.

A country that wishes to overturn the international order can disguise its intent through a revisionism that argues only for adjustments that guarantee an equitable order. Successful revisionism may whet a country's appetite so that even if it did not initially seek to overthrow the international order its early successes can cause it to change its objectives. The tendency to view international relations as a struggle within a state of nature between the usurper and the protectors of order will identify the revisionist as the usurper. As Betts notes,

A complaint I have heard in conversations with several U.S. officials is that many past estimates of Soviet objectives could substitute the name of any other great power in history--Imperial Rome, 16th-century Spain, Napoleonic France--and sound equally valid.¹

The debate over Soviet objectives has occurred before over the objectives of other countries. Other countries have used revisionism to disguise their goals of political hegemony. Occasionally, a country such as Bismarck's Germany contents itself with its early gains thus lending credence to the argument that appeasement will lead to peace. The risks of appeasement or resistance depend on whether the "usurper" feigns revisionism to prepare the way for the ultimate quest for hegemony.

Eventually, an unchecked usurper must reveal his colors. By appealing to international norms and respecting the form if not the substance of international laws, a country can easily disguise its strategic intent to overthrow the international order. The aggressor can always rely on its initial appeals to a just and equitable order to excuse its initial actions and disguise its strategic intent.

The Fruits of Strategic Deception: Surprise, Opportunism, and *Faits Accomplis*. The debate over the origins of the cold war easily supports the contention that the same evidence can support contradictory interpretations of a country's motivations. Some have argued that Stalin merely exploited the opportunities as they appeared to consolidate Russian power in Eastern Europe much as some currently argue

¹ Ibid., p. 71.

that Soviet support of intervention reflects opportunism and not design. An opportunistic policy apparently poses less of a threat to world order than a purposively aggressive one.

Surprise may occur because a country acts swiftly to exploit an opportunity or because it has deliberately misled the world in order to achieve a *fait accompli*. A country benefits by surprise when it consolidates its position before third parties can intervene. A country achieves strategic surprise when others have failed to prepare counteractions and operational surprise, and, while anticipating action, fail to identify the precise timing or method of action. If a country can deceive others about its long-term aggressive designs by excusing its actions as revisionism or opportunism then it can succeed in achieving strategic surprise as well.

By disguising its preparations for action, a country can act swiftly when opportunity arises. Delaying decision until the last moment has characterized numerous examples of strategic surprise.¹ By preparing to respond quickly to a variety of threats, a country also acquires the ability to exploit opportunities swiftly. Constant readiness or periodic behavior such as annual maneuvers lessen the need to prepare deception to disguise specific actions.

Although deception can facilitate a specific operation by allowing a country to act swiftly, it can also offset interference by third parties by projecting an image that resistance or intervention will not succeed. A country can deter interference by manipulating perceptions of its military strength and deployment of forces.

Deterrence and Influence by Deception. The willingness to resort to military solutions provides the context for much of international politics. The implicit threat of force underlies much of the interaction between adversaries. To achieve success in dealing with those adversaries, a country may decide to deceive its opponents regarding the size, composition, performance and deployment of its military forces.

¹Steve Chan, "The Intelligence of Stupidity: Understanding Failures in Strategic Warning," *American Political Science Review*, 73 (1) March 1979, p. 173.

The British wished to project an image of greater than actual military strength when the German State Secretary for Air, General Milch, visited England in October 1937. To impress the Germans, the British arranged to display the prototypes of their new bombers, fully equipped for the first time. Churchill exploited this deception to comment on the state of British preparedness in the air:

We have invited the German Mission over--why I cannot tell. Highly competent men are coming. A desperate effort is now being made to present a sham-show. A power-driven turret is to be shown, as if it was the kind of thing we are doing in the regular way. Ought it to be shown at all? You will see that a special telegram has to be sent to fetch one of the only men acquainted with this turret to give a demonstration. You will also see the feelings of some of the high officers concerned. You will also see from the statement, made by the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief Bomber Command...Ludlow-Hewitt, how he is forced to address himself to the task of making a show; and what exertions are necessary to put little more than a hundred bombers in the air--the great majority of which (as the Germans will readily see) can barely reach the coast of Germany with a bomb load....¹

Countries often resort to deception to convey greater than actual military strength. The bomber and missile gap controversies from the mid 1950s to the early 1960s resulted in part from Soviet attempts to deceive Americans. Observers at the Aviation Day parade on 13 July 1955 saw at least 28 Bisons, a Soviet strategic bomber, fly past the reviewing stand. Although the Soviets had only ten Bisons serviceable that day, they created the impression of greater numbers by having the same planes circle the reviewing stand.

Confusion over the opponent's capacity to produce weapons greatly contributes to attempts to project greater than actual, and in certain cases, less than actual, military strength. Disguising defense budgets has complicated attempts to assess the true size, not only of Nazi, but also of Soviet and Israeli defense expenditures. The tendency of military planners to make worst case assumptions will generally lead to

¹Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill, The Prophet of Truth* (Houghton-Mifflin: Boston, 1977), p. 877.

inflated projections in the face of uncertainty.¹ Deceptions about military industrial capacity will heavily influence projections of a country's future military strength.

Numbers matter but so does performance. Industrial firms tend to inflate claims in order to sell products. An astute deception planner could pick up on these claims to tout the overall capability of the military. Aircraft specially designed to achieve speed records complicate assessments on production models that receive very little publicity. Specially staged tests may provide little clue about how these weapons would perform under combat conditions. Most methods used to divine the performance of weapons in peacetime provide opportunities for deception.

Organization and doctrine also provide materials for deception. Confusion over Soviet doctrine has led some to conclude that the Soviet Union pursues avowedly expansionist objectives. The Soviets structure their forces according to the classic military principle that deterrence succeeds best when the other side can perceive it has little chance of military success should a war start. Because the Soviets believe that large forces maintained at high readiness provide a hedge against the massive destruction that will occur during a nuclear war, such forces appear as particularly apt and threatening instruments of aggression whatever their stated defensive purpose. Either the Soviets are deceiving the West and intend aggression or they feel that only large and ready forces can deter the aggressors in the West.

The West and particularly the United States maintain their strategic forces at a particularly high level of alert. The Soviets rely primarily on the Strategic Rocket Forces and presume that strategic warning will prove sufficient to generate and deploy their bombers and SSBNs. The U.S. excuses its high readiness by posing the possibility of a Soviet surprise attack. Nevertheless, forces ready to react can also act quickly. To the Soviets the U.S. strategic forces seem constantly prepared for the attack and not defense. To the Soviets, U.S. doctrine seems merely a cover to disguise aggressive intent.

¹Albert Wohlstetter, *Legends of the Arms Race*, USSI Report 75-1 (United States Strategic Institute: Washington, D.C., 1975) examines a case where U.S. analysts underestimated projected numbers of Soviet ICBMs.

Organization may also influence an opponent's assessment of military capability. A country may pursue a broad but shallow organizational structure to project the image of a large military. Such a country would sacrifice reserves, training, and munitions for divisional front line units. A country may also structure its forces to confuse the intelligence operations of its opponents. Using cadre forces to staff divisional or group headquarters without adding the appropriate battalions creates the impression of greater than actual forces. Maintaining many units at low readiness and understrength also overstates a country's capability.

Maneuvers and exercises, if properly staged, can also deceive adversaries regarding doctrine and performance. If a country practices its forces in a particular way, an intelligence service would reasonably assume that it would use its forces that way in war. If a unit outfitted with a particular weapon performs exceptionally well, then foreign intelligence would assume that the weapon posed a greater than normal threat and respond accordingly.

HITLER'S PROGRAM

Unless Hitler followed some plan in his foreign policy, whatever deceptions the Germans perpetrated become merely operational-tactical. The strategic nature of peacetime deceptions follows from the foreign policy objectives they serve. The Nazis could have continued and accelerated the clandestine armament program of Weimar. Even systematic and sustained attempts to disguise the true nature and extent of military capabilities do not become strategic until they serve specific political and not simply military objectives. Intent matters. The Weimar Republic practiced deception to assure at least some defense if attacked; they had little else in mind. The Nazis integrated their rearmament, both clandestine and open, into their overall foreign policy.

A.J.P. Taylor, Opportunism and the Rigid Timetable

The publication of A.J.P. Taylor's *Origins of the Second World War* raised a storm of controversy over Hitler's political objectives.

When he wrote Taylor discerned two schools of thought: one that styled Hitler as a nihilist bent upon world war for its own sake, the other that Hitler "had a coherent long-term plan of an original nature which he pursued with unwavering persistence."¹ Taylor's critics have castigated him for absolving Hitler from the responsibility for the Second World War. To his critics, Taylor has

...argued that Hitler had acted the role of a traditional German statesman seeking traditional German goals; that the results of his policy were accidental since, in fact, he had no real policy other than to wait and make the most of the opportunities presented by the ineptitude of his opponents; that many provisions of the Versailles Treaty made the Second World War inevitable, and that ultimately Hitler became involved in war "through launching on 29 August a diplomatic maneuver which he ought to have launched on 28 August."²

Even if Hitler merely exploited the opportunities that others presented to him, he could still have a definite direction to his policy. Even if Hitler reversed directions from opportunity to opportunity, he could have adopted different tactics to suit the situation. To pursue colonies in one instance, Lebensraum in another, and Germany's pre-1914 boundaries in still a third may make for poor and chaotic policy, no policy at all, or a definite policy that awaits favorable events.

Hitler did not foresee the events that produced Munich and the response of Britain and France to the Polish war. But Hitler did intend to redress Versailles and to build a greater Germany that included all Germans in a single state. Whether Hitler desired world domination in consortium with Britain, as it seems he did, matters less than that he did have long-range political goals, the achievement of which threatened war when they required the overthrow of the international order and the dismemberment and extinction of other states.

Taylor realizes that Hitler "did not so much aim at war as expect it to happen, unless he could evade it by some ingenious trick."³

¹Taylor, *Origins of the Second World War*, p. 279.

²C. Robert Cole, "Critics of the Taylor View of History," in E.M. Robertson (ed.), op. cit., p. 142.

³Taylor, *Origins of the Second World War*, p. 281.

Taylor concedes that Hitler planned small wars, such as the attack on Poland, but not a world war. To deter outside intervention while he gobbled up small states, he needed a military more amenable to inflated estimates of its strength than to the sustained requirements of the First World War.

To Taylor, deception played a major role in Hitler's strategy:

Pretending to prepare for a great war and not in fact doing it was an essential part of Hitler's political strategy; and those who sounded the alarm against him, such as Churchill, unwittingly did his work for him. The device was new and took everyone in. Previously governments spent more on armaments than they admitted, as most do to the present day...How was it possible that a statesman could exaggerate his armaments instead of concealing them? Yet this was what Hitler had done.¹

Thus, even Taylor, the supposed apostle of opportunism, argues that Hitler structured and touted his forces to achieve maximum political effect. To achieve his goals, Hitler needed to convince his foreign opponents that only military defeat would follow their intervention in his foreign policy coups while he lacked the actual military strength to defeat them in battle.

Others, such as Alan Bullock, have argued much more strongly than Taylor for the view of Hitler as an unprincipled opportunist whose only goal seemed expansion. Some recent German historiography has Hitler's policy dominated by domestic concerns with foreign politics entering only by the back door.² This school views Hitler's foreign politics as almost wholly a product of his need to strengthen his domestic political base. Foreign adventure provides diversion or fuels an economy too heated to survive on domestic resources alone. An apparent pattern of strategic deception would result from attempts by Hitler's subordinates to impress him in the race for scarce domestic funds.

¹Ibid., p. 286.

²See discussion in Andreas Hillgruber, "England's Place in Hitler's Plans for World Domination," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 9 (1), January 1974, pp. 5-22.

Hitler's Stufenplan

Recently, work by Klaus Hildebrand, Andrew Hillgruber, and others has developed a view of Hitler that combines elements both of opportunism and planning.¹ Even Alan Bullock divined purpose in Hitler's actions and contrasted him with "Mussolini, an opportunist who snatched eagerly at any chance that was going but never succeeded in combining even his successes into a coherent policy."² Instead Hitler "combined consistency of aim with complete opportunism in methods and tactics."³ Bullock makes his point too strongly: Hitler's use of the Luftwaffe betrays considerable continuity in methods.

Hillgruber and Hildebrand argue that Hitler's aims fall into three phases.⁴ In the first phase, Hitler would buy an alliance with Britain by renouncing colonial claims and conquer Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and France. Either with or against Britain, Germany would launch the second phase, a struggle with the United States for world supremacy. The selective biological breeding of the German would assure the success of third phase, continued world dominance by the superior German race. Hitler initially believed that he could only achieve the objectives of the first phase in his lifetime.

Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and his much less well-known *Second Book* laid the foundations for his program in the 1920s. Although Hitler often did not specify his methods, Britain played a major role in the quest for German supremacy.

England in Hitler's Program

As the major European power that consistently intervened to assure that no country would dominate the continent, Britain occupied a central place in Hitler's thinking. Hitler thought that Britain would

¹Ibid., Klaus Hildebrand, *The Foreign Policy of the Third Reich* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1973); Barry Leach, *German Strategy Against Russia 1939-1941* (Oxford University Press: London, 1973).

²Allan Bullock, "Hitler and the Origins of the Second World War," in E.M. Robertson (ed.), op. cit., p. 193.

³Ibid.

⁴Hillgruber, op. cit., pp. 8-12; Hildebrand, op. cit., pp. 18-23.

acquiesce in Germany's move to conquer Lebensraum in the East, so long as Germany did not threaten Britain's traditional commercial and colonial interests:

if Germany adopts a fundamentally new political orientation that no longer clashes with England's naval and commercial interests, instead of concentrating on Europe, then England would have no further ground for her hostility which, if pursued, would amount to nothing but hostility for hostility's sake. Even the balance of power in Europe interests England only insofar as it prevents the rise of a rival commercial and maritime world power.¹

So long as Germany did not pursue colonies it would pose little threat and not incur Britain's wrath. When British journalists asked Hitler in 1931 whether his party, in power, could pursue a Wilhelmine Welt-politik, Hitler responded that he would grant Britain supremacy at sea for a free hand in the East.²

After assuming power in 1933, Hitler first consolidated his domestic position and then on the Night of the Long Knives in June 1934 and a few months later a military alliance.³ His quest finally bore fruit in the Anglo-German naval pact of June 1935, which Hitler regarded as the crowning achievement of the Luftwaffe in March 1935.

Hitler's policy of appeasement toward Britain, since no colonies had not been lost, was based on the belief that the British could only be satisfied if Germany was allowed to expand. Hitler recognized that their policy was based on the recognition of the Anglo-German naval pact. Hitler's admission, marked the beginning of the end of the British. Surely, Britain

was not satisfied in November 1937, when Hitler met the British. The meeting confirmed Hitler's belief that the British would force the British,

¹ See, e.g., Hillgruber, op. cit.,

Hitler formally raised the issue of colonial demands in his great "peace speech" which capped the Rhineland occupation in March 1936. Evidence of British weakness--its policy in the Ethiopian War (1935-1936), the Spanish Civil War (from 1936), and the Sino-Japanese War (from 1937)--led Hitler to believe that Britain's star had fallen, that Germany could succeed without England.

If, as all the events of the preceding years had allowed him to expect, German operations provoked no active military intervention, then there was no occasion for Hitler to delay implementing...a foreign policy designed to effect territorial changes by force, still less...to shelve it indefinitely. Hitler no longer thought to carry out his programme with England, as planned in *Mein Kampf*, nor, preferably, against, but simply without her.¹

The Hossbach conference of 5 November 1937 marked a shift in Hitler's policy towards Britain. He conceded that Britain may actively oppose his plans in the East but doubted that she would intervene:

German politics must reckon with its two hateful enemies, England and France, to whom a strong German colossus in the center of Europe would be intolerable...in all probability, England, and perhaps also France, have already silently written off Czechoslovakia. Britain's difficulties within the Empire and the prospect of her becoming involved in another long and ruinous European conflict will be sufficient to prevent her from going to war with Germany and without British support an attack by France is hardly probable.²

Blomberg, the War Minister, Fritsch, the Army Commander-in-Chief, and Neurath objected to any course of action that even hinted of war with Britain and France.³ By March 1938, Hitler had purged them, assuming the War Minister portfolio and commander-in-chief of armed forces position himself, and replacing Fritsch and Neurath with the more compliant Brauchitsch and Ribbentrop, respectively.

¹Ibid., pp. 13-14, emphasis in text.

²DGFP, D, I, pp. 29-39; Office of the Chief of Counsel for Prosecutor of Axis Criminality, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression (NCAA)* (GPO: Washington, 1946), Vol. 3, pp. 295-305.

³Robert O'Neill, *The German Army and the Nazi Party: 1933-1939* (Heineman: New York, 1969), pp. 133-136; Irving, op. cit., pp. 3-20.

Up to Munich, Hitler became increasingly disenchanted with Britain and began to foresee a real risk of war after the May crisis in 1938. British policy seemed bent on appeasement, to concede peaceable German expansion in Central Europe and to offer colonies to deflect German aggression. The German loss of face over the May crisis angered Hitler and he became determined to crush Czechoslovakia. The Chamberlain initiative that led to the Munich settlement denied Hitler his military victory over the Czechs and emphasized that Hitler could not succeed in Eastern Europe without involving the British politically if not militarily.

After Munich, Hitler accepted that his quest for continental expansion might involve war with Britain. Hitler foresaw that he might have to confront Britain earlier than he initially thought, to compete directly with Britain for world supremacy rather than simply excluding Britain, by force if necessary, from the continent. Hitler authorized the Navy to build an enormous fleet and tasked the Luftwaffe to develop an attack plan against Britain.¹ Hitler apparently believed that he had failed politically in his attempt to forge an alliance with Britain; now he would use force.

To succeed in the East, Hitler now believed he might have to attack in the West as his comments to Carl Burckhardt on 11 August 1939 reveal:

Everything I undertake is aimed at Russia; if the West is too stupid and too blind to see this, I shall be forced to come to an understanding with the Russians, defeat the West, and then marshal my forces against the Soviet Union. I need the Ukraine so that they cannot starve us out as they did in the last war.²

To succeed in the East, Hitler now accepted that he must first throw Britain off the continent, but always he held out the hope for an Anglo-German alliance to rule the world.

Hitler's British policy reveals a common thread traceable back to his earlier pronouncements in the 1920s but altered to accommodate the political and military realities of the British alliance. He changed

¹Taylor, *Origins of the Second World War*, p. 865; Hillgruber, op. cit., p. 15.

²Hillgruber, op. cit., p. 16.

his methods as he discovered British resistance to his expansionist aims in the East. Hitler's British policy contrasts with his attitudes towards the French, a country he considered hopelessly corrupted by Jews.

If the Germans engaged in strategic deception, they would need to differentiate between the British and the French, at least before mid 1938. The British should find themselves the recipient not only of demonstrations of German strength but also of German willingness to win their confidence politically if not militarily. Hitler would woo the French until he considered the Wehrmacht strong enough to neutralize them and then the French would become the butt of intimidation. As soon as the Wehrmacht gained sufficient apparent strength, the soft words of peace would yield to the harsh words of demands and force.

The Military in Hitler's Program

The image of military strength drives much of international relations. In peace and often in war, the image of military strength matters much more than the actual ability of the military to fight. Hitler understood this and designed his rearmament program and his foreign policy to accommodate both the real and apparent strength of the Wehrmacht. In 1933 the Nazis inherited armed forces severely constrained by the Versailles Treaty but skilled in circumventing its provisions. Hitler needed to build a strong army, not only to achieve his expansionist objectives, but also to justify rearmament necessary to stimulate a sagging economy.¹ Massive rearmament would allow Hitler to solve the economic crisis and permit political expansion.

Germany, militarily weak and shackled by Versailles, could not throw off the chains immediately without risking intervention. The memory of the French occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 lingered. Germany would have to continue with and accelerate clandestine rearmament while preparing the way politically for justifying the forces openly. Hitler continued the policies of his predecessors: disarmament but only when Germany shares equal "rights" with the other powers while simultaneously

¹Hildebrand, op. cit., p. 27.

portraying the vulnerability of Germany to foreign attacks. Hitler would make only legitimate demands and appeal to the British to overthrow the discriminatory provisions of Versailles.

To create the maximum political effect, Germany should rearm in such a way as to project as much strength as possible when the announcement of open forces comes. The greater the apparent force, the less likely that others will intervene. Thus a broad but shallow program should form the basis for rearmament. Military effectiveness and depth should yield to appearance. Such a policy serves two other objectives. If Germany retains its paramilitary organizations such as the SA, doubts remain about their military worth and other countries must include such formations in their "worst case" estimates of German power. If other countries decide to intervene, then the paramilitary organizations provide a foundation upon which to rebuild the military again. Hitler would often test the waters slightly before continuing with his policy. Then he would present a dramatic *fait accompli*. Such caution while accepting great risks displays

a basic characteristic of Hitler's policies: to hazard the political and military risk, while always leaving open the possibility of an immediate climb-down in the event of genuine resistance.¹

A broad but shallow rearmament program also facilitates a policy based on political coups executed quickly enough to forestall intervention. By choosing objectives that he could quickly achieve, Hitler lessened the probability of intervention. An armed force that appears strong will lessen the probability of intervention even further. Surprise also helps to present the world with *faits accomplis*. Hitler recognized the need to act quickly at the Hossbach conference when he conceded that "Russian support for Czechoslovakia may well be counted on, but in this case their intervention must be countered by the speed of our military operations."

Hitler would not need a force designed to fight a long campaign. Extensive reserves of equipment would do little to impress the world. Rather, the military should have as large a paper strength as possible.

¹Ibid., p. 28.

He needed the military only to win campaigns against much weaker opponents while it deterred the real military powers from intervening. Until 1938, Hitler intended to succeed through political means aided by the image of a strong military. From 1938, Hitler felt his military strong enough to defeat quickly weak opponents, while deterring stronger ones from intervening. General der Infanterie Thomas, the head of the economic branch of the OKW, stated after the war that "up to 1937 Hitler never had any intention of starting a war but he believed he could, through putting over the bluff of rapid rearmament reach his goal by peaceful means."¹

¹Kenneth Macksey, *Guderian: Creator of the Blitzkrieg* (Stein and Day: New York, 1975), p. 58.

III. GERMAN DECEPTIONS IN THE 1930s: MANIPULATING PERCEPTIONS OF MILITARY STRENGTH

Hitler and his subordinates manipulated perceptions of German military strength throughout the 1930s. Prior to the 1935 Saar plebiscite, Hitler used diplomacy to cover rearmament. After 1935, Hitler exploited the image of the Luftwaffe and German military might to achieve diplomatic triumphs. Occasionally, Hitler's subordinates would fabricate deceptions for specific objectives. At other times, the Propaganda Ministry would exploit the competition between aircraft manufacturers to tout German industrial and military prowess. Hitler himself would exploit the confusion of his adversaries regarding the size of the Luftwaffe to clinch his point. The succession of deceptions individually appear opportunistic; overall the attempts to deceive foreign opinion form a pattern consistent with Hitler's long-range goals to neutralize the British and win without fighting.

The problems on Hitler's agenda when he assumed power in 1932 seemed straightforward. Hitler's long-range goals pointed Germany towards the East. To achieve those goals he needed to restore Germany as a great power, to remove the shackles of Versailles. To embark upon foreign quests, he needed first to consolidate his position at home. To rebuild the military limited by Versailles, Hitler needed a program of rearmament that would make the military appear stronger than it actually was to deter intervention. Such policies would induce other countries to respond not through intervention from which the Germans skillfully deterred them, but through rearmament to meet the "greater than actual" threat. Hitler understood this when he argued that Germany with its limited resources had only a small time window within which to act. Deception would necessarily play a critical role, first to conceal rearmament, second to tout the size of the German forces to deter intervention and then to delay the speed with which the opponents rearmed.

CAMOUFLAGE TO 1933

Although they accelerated its pace, the Nazis did not begin secret rearmament. The Germans defied the strict provisions of the Versailles

Treaty from the beginning. Part V of the treaty banned, among other things, the maintenance of a General Staff, the establishment of an air force, and the possession of military aircraft, tanks, submarines, and heavy artillery. The Germans disguised their General Staff within the Truppenamt, Troops Office of the Ministry of Defense, and gradually circumvented almost every restriction of the Versailles Treaty. Nevertheless, "until 1933 practically nothing was operational that the Versailles Treaty had expressly forbidden."¹ The Reichswehr during Weimar laid the foundation for the rapid expansion of the Luftwaffe after 1933.

The Versailles Treaty prohibited Germany from manufacturing any aircraft, but the Allies successively dropped all restrictions on civil aviation. The Ambassadors Conference in 1922 permitted the construction of limited performance aircraft. The Paris Air Agreement of May 1926 removed the remaining restrictions on civil aviation and even permitted limited numbers of "aircraft conforming to the aeronautical performance of current types of fighter aircraft" to participate in competitions and attempts to break records.² Military aviation remained banned.

The Treaty of Rapallo concluded between the Soviet Union and Germany on 16 April 1922 opened the way for military collaboration. A Russo-German conference in April 1925 led to the establishment of a joint flying school at Lipetsk in the summer of that year. The Germans tested their aircraft and trained their pilots and crews at Lipetsk until 1933 when Hitler ordered Russo-German cooperation to cease. Trainees resigned from the Reichswehr during their stay at Lipetsk and reactivated later to circumvent the Versailles ban on sending military missions abroad.³ The Germans maintained an elaborate deception for their military interactions with the Soviets. Registered trading

¹Wolfgang Sauer, quoted in Edward L. Homze, *Arming the Luftwaffe* (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln, Nebraska, 1976), p. 40.

²Hanfried Schliephake, *The Birth of the Luftwaffe* (Henry Regnery: Chicago, 1971), p. 23.

³Richard Suchenwirth, *The Development of the German Air Force, 1919-1939* (Arno Press: New York, 1970), p. 21.

companies provided the cover for frontier traffic. The Reichswehr smuggled across the Baltic items such as bombs difficult to identify as non-military. Airmen killed during training at Lipetsk passed customs in coffins labeled machine parts.¹

The German Defense Ministry established the national airline, Lufthansa, in January 1926. Felmy, then a Lieutenant Colonel and head of the Air Operations and Training Office, specified on 19 May 1930 that mobilization would yield a reconnaissance squadron, two fighter squadrons, and a night bomber squadron for the Army Commander-in-Chief, and for each Army Higher Command and each Corps Command to total 22 squadrons in all.² The "commercial flying schools" and Lufthansa would provide the pilots, the aircraft and the facilities.³ "French military intelligence estimated that in 1931 Germany possessed 1100 civilian airplanes, 400 of which had potential military use after a short conversion period of eight to ten days."⁴

On 29 November 1930, the Reich government lifted the ban on stockpiling military aircraft and weapons. The Reichswehr activated three squadrons of four airplanes each as "Reklamestaffeln," commercial skywriting squadrons. District military headquarters used these squadrons for simulating close air support during training exercises.⁵

In February 1932, the Reichswehr predicted it would have 228 aircraft--36 military and 192 converted from civilian planes--by April and 274 aircraft--an additional 46 military planes--by the next year. Colonel Wimmer of the Reichswehr Technical Office speculated that "in the future, the only nations to have anything to say will be those built around an airplane that can, day or night, strike fear in the hearts of the enemy population." At the same time, Felmy submitted a

¹Schliephake, op. cit., p. 27.

²Ibid.

³Suchenwirth, op. cit., p. 38.

⁴Homze, op. cit., p. 32.

⁵Ibid., p. 33.

rearmament plan that echoed Wimmer's Douhetian sentiments. Felmy proposed an 80 squadron air force, including 42 squadrons of bombers, by 1938 to total 720 aircraft and 240 in reserve.¹ In July, technical specifications called for five new aircraft including a heavy bomber with a 2500 km range and a two metric ton bomb load.²

Previously subordinate to the Weapons School Inspectorate, the Air Inspectorate became an independent agency of the Truppenamt on 24 January 1933. Two weeks later, Blomberg, Reichswehr Minister established a central air operations staff within the Ministry under the name Luftschutzamt (Air Raid Protection Department). The move towards an independent air force had occurred prior to Hitler's accession as Chancellor on 30 January 1933.³ The fate of the Luftwaffe was now tied to the Nazis.

CAMOUFLAGE UNDER THE NAZIS⁴

On 4 February 1933, Hitler met with leaders of the military and expressed his hopes and dreams. Hitler promised to negate Versailles and to attain "equality of rights" at the disarmament conference at Geneva.⁵ For Germany to gain power, it would need strong armed forces. According to notes taken at the time, Hitler said:

¹Ibid., p. 33-34.

²Ibid., p. 35.

³Schliephake, op. cit., p. 30.

⁴Air Ministry, *The Rise and Fall of the German Air Force* (HMSO: London, 1949); Georges Castellon, *Le rearmement clandestine du Reich 1930-1935* (Plon: Paris, 1954).

⁵On 22 July 1932, the German representative to the Disarmament Conference stipulated that Germany would not continue the negotiations unless the other countries recognized its "equality of rights." Such equality would imply the lifting of Versailles restrictions from Germany.

How should political power be used when it has been won? Cannot yet be said. Perhaps fighting for and winning new opportunities for export, perhaps--and probably better--seizure of new Lebensraum in the East and its ruthless Germanization. Certain that only with political power and struggle can present economic situation be fundamentally changed. Everything that can happen now--resettlement--stopgap expedient.¹

After outlining his aims and acknowledging the basic opportunism of his tactics, Hitler expressed concern about the intervention of France during the critical rearmament period.

Most dangerous time is that of Wehrmacht expansion. Then it will be seen whether France has *statesmen*; if yes, she will not give us time, but will assail us (presumably with eastern satellites).²

To prevent French interference, Hitler suggested concealment:

One must consider concealment to be especially valuable in the near future, because [Hitler] was convinced that precisely the period between the theoretical recognition of Germany's equality of rights and the regaining of a certain state of armament would be most difficult and most dangerous. The main difficulties of rearmament would only be overcome when Germany had rearmed to such a degree that she became fit for alliance in combination with some other power, if necessary also against France.³

The military would have to appear as strong as possible when the Nazis unveiled it to offset the possibility that the French would intervene. Concealment also allowed the Germans to feign vulnerability in order to garner concessions. Once equality was granted only the appearance of strength would deter intervention. But despite the risks and an implicit desire to delay achieving "equality" except under conditions orchestrated by the Nazis, rearmament would continue as the first priority:

¹Edward W. Bennett, *German Rearmament and the West, 1932-1933* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J., 1979), p. 322.

²Ibid., p. 324, emphasis in text.

³Ibid., p. 324-5. Notes on a Hitler speech of 9 February 1933 to the Reich Committee on Work Creation.

Germany's future hung exclusively and alone on building up the armed forces again. [Hitler] could only accept the limited character of the means now asked by the Reichswehr Ministry on the grounds that the tempo of rearmament could not in the coming year be accelerated more sharply. In any case, he took the view that in future, in case of a collision between the claims of the Wehrmacht and claims for other purposes, the interests of the armed forces under all conditions had to come first. The granting of the resources of the immediate [work-creation] program was also to be decided in this sense. He considered the combatting of unemployment by public expenditures to be the most suitable means of assistance. The 500 million program was the largest of its kind and especially suited to serve the interests of rearmament. It served best to make possible the concealment of work for the improvement of national defense.

The air force provided a unique vehicle for promoting Hitler's foreign policy. Doubts would always linger in the minds of foreign intelligence experts about the extent to which the Germans could convert civilian aircraft to military use, especially since the government controlled the only German airline, Lufthansa. Baldwin had stated before parliament in November 1932 that "the bombers will always get through." Bombers posed a clear threat and Milch, then head of Lufthansa, later Secretary of State for Air under the Nazis, noted that Hitler had spoken of the ideas of Douhet as early as April 1932:

Hitler then spoke at length on the ideas of General Douhet. As early as this he was principally interested in bombing warfare as the best means of deterring an aggressor. He talked of the importance of powerful armed forces, in which he saw the air force as occupying a position equal to the army's (at the time a totally novel concept); this was the only way for Germany to rid herself of the shackles of Versailles short of war itself.²

¹Ibid., p. 340.

²David Irving, *The Rise and Fall of the Luftwaffe* (Little, Brown: Boston, 1973), p. 27.

Hitler entrusted the development of the Luftwaffe to Hermann Goering, who managed to wrest control of military aviation from the Reichswehr in May 1933. In 1938, Goering recounted a speech he had given in March 1933 to a group of aircraft manufacturers:

Camouflaged, for the time being, Germany is prostrate as yet, and there are still too many keen foreign eyes peering at what we are doing inside the Reich. We must build an air fleet, a risiko-flotte (stake fleet) and under the cover of this we will be able to complete an entire rearmament program.¹

Whether Goering actually said these words in 1933 matters less than the notion which quickly took hold that the Luftwaffe rearmament would deter foreign attacks. Hitler left the direction of the Luftwaffe to Goering until the failures of 1943.²

The notion of a risk air force that echoed Tirpitz's "risk navy" before 1914 did appear in a memo received by Milch in May 1933. This memo argued that the air power would decisively determine the outcome of future wars. To prevent intervention until the army and navy gained strength, the memo proposed a large heavy bomber force to deter a "preventive war" by France and Poland. "Germany's geographical position dictated an 'inner line' strategy of mobile forces based on air units which could be massed quickly to strike a decisive blow." Bombers could be procured much faster and much more cheaply than battleships and would provide the necessary breathing space for the rearmament of the navy and the army. Milch noted his agreement with this memo and met with General Reichenau, head of the Wehrmachtsamt, on June 19, 1933, to discuss the necessary steps to build up the air force along the lines of the memo.³

¹Ladislas Farago (comp. and ed.), *The Axis Grand Strategy* (Farrar and Rhinehart: New York, 1942), p. 284.

²Homze, op. cit., p. 51.

³Homze, op. cit., pp. 55-6.

Although the army felt that short-range twin-engined bombers made more sense, Goering touted a strategic air force abroad while building a tactical air force at home. On 1 August 1939, Goering admitted that the risk fleet attempted to deter France and gain time for rearmament:

At that time we possessed only limited means, but we did have enough to build a risk fleet which could ensure further rearmament and prepare the way for the Führer to proclaim the resumption of the universal draft.¹

The need to project an image of German vulnerability while accelerating the pace of rearmament appealed to Goering's sense of theater. On 24 June 1933, the *Völkischer Beobachter* proclaimed in banner type--RED PLAGUE OVER BERLIN!--referring to "unknown" foreign warplanes dropping leaflets over the city.² The Propaganda Ministry had fabricated this episode. Goering indicated, 12 July 1933 at a conference on "Status of the Disarmament Question and Guidelines for Disarmament Propaganda," that the disarmament propaganda should place strong emphasis on "flights over German territory by propaganda planes and the complete helplessness of Germany against such attacks."³ Both Milch and Goering exploited the 24 June episode, Goering to seek the purchase of police planes (from Great Britain!) and Milch to demand equality of rights for Germany in the air and on land.⁴

On 22 February and 16 April 1934, the German government submitted proposals on rearmament to the British and the French that included the following provision: a defensive German air force of short-range machines, the number not to exceed 30 percent of the combined air forces of Germany's neighbors or 50 percent of the metropolitan air

¹Ibid., p. 56.

²Herbert Mason, *The Rise of the Luftwaffe* (Dial Press: New York, 1973), p. 176.

³DGFP, C, I, pp. 647-9.

⁴DGFP, C, I, pp. 696-70; DBFP, 2, V, Nos. 256 and 327, among others.

forces of France, whichever figure is less. This meant that Germany had agreed not to deploy bombers. Members of the German Foreign Ministry and Blomberg considered these restrictions as binding but apparently the Foreign Ministry had not received much direct information on actual German rearmament:

The most important thing is our air rearmament, since it or rather the information about it which has percolated to Britain, is the main reason why Britain has gone over to the side of France. I am not clear as to what has actually been done here so far in the sphere of our rearmament nor what is being planned for the near future, so I have no clue as to whether our programme for the construction of military aircraft is being kept, as regards numbers, within the limits of the statement of April 16 (not more than 50 percent of the French and of the British figures, which are going to be on the same level for the next five years). Nor can I tell whether the Reich Air Ministry in its present measures proposes simply to disregard the statement of April 16 or whether it still wishes to cover these measures by a generous interpretation of the April 16 document. Thus the Reich Air Ministry maintains that the Ju-52 and Do-11 types are not really bombers, because amongst other things, they are not, or only with difficulty, able to carry machine guns and are therefore of little military value. I do not know definitely whether there are any actual bombers as well, and, if so, how many. Nor did I know how far the number of auxiliary bombers exceeds the legitimate requirements of civil aviation. It is certain that bombs have been manufactured, and in large quantities. This is again a matter of interpretation: The Reich Air Ministry appears to take the view that at the discussion with Eden, we only renounced bomber aircraft as a type but not the dropping of bombs themselves. Bombs could also be dropped from the general combat aircraft which we have demanded for the immediate future. Accordingly, exercises in bombing from the air are to be started very shortly. "Started" really means "started officially," for trials with "mail-bags" and the like have, to my knowledge, been going on for a long time.¹

¹DGFP, C, III, pp. 325-6.

By August 1934 even the German Foreign Ministry came to realize that the Reichswehr was not adhering to the "Statement of 16 April."

Ignorant of actual rearmament plans, members of the Foreign Ministry could negotiate in good faith with their British and French counterparts. The German Foreign Ministry felt that it should negotiate the terms for recognizing Germany's "equality of rights." The Statement of 16 April tacitly recognizes that equality and winks at the German rearmament already in progress. The British and French had illusions only about the extent of German rearmament.

Despite Foreign Ministry ignorance, the Germans had no intention of following the restrictions indicated by the 16 April proposal. In a top secret order dated 24 April 1934, the third stage of the Luftwaffe buildup began, calling for five bomber versus two fighter Geschwader (groups) by 1 October 1936.¹ The preponderance of bomber groups would suggest to the British and French mind an attempt to build a strategic air force. The risk air force was building as rapidly as the German Air Ministry could secure resources. The rearmament program emphasized numbers of aircraft at the sacrifice of weapons, organization and training.

THE ACTIVE PURSUIT OF THE BRITISH ALLIANCE

Events during the summer of 1934 prepared the way for the unveiling of the Luftwaffe in 1935. The date of the Saar plebiscite was set for 13 January 1935. The murder of Roehm and other domestic opponents on 30 June 1934, and Hitler's assumption of the presidency on 19 August following Hindenburg's death consolidated Hitler's power at home and allowed him sufficient security to pursue his objectives abroad.

In 1934, Hitler sent Ribbentrop to London to prepare the way for a naval pact with Britain. The Germans hit upon the ratio of 35 percent of British naval strength apparently because this would place the Germans

¹Karl Ries, *Luftwaffen-Story: 1935-1939* (Verlag Dieter Hoffman: Mainz, FRG, 1974), pp. 18-19.

ostensibly equal to France while not threatening British naval supremacy.¹ Ribbentrop also discussed air rearmament with the then Foreign Minister, Sir John Simon and his eventual successor, Anthony Eden. On 14 November 1934, *The Times* reported that Ribbentrop had explained to Simon and Eden "the nature of such rearmament as is proceeding in Germany and...stated emphatically that it had no aggressive purpose." Although the interview had occurred, Ribbentrop had made no such comment.² Such comments in the press continued to legitimize the still illegal rearmament in Germany. The conclusion of the Anglo-German naval agreement would finish that legitimization process.

The Germans won a resounding victory in the Saar plebiscite on 13 January 1935. Two days later Hitler instructed the German navy to put armament plans "into operation more speedily, so that the actual level reached shall be as high as possible when the negotiations start."³

A decree dated 26 February 1935 established the Reichsluftwaffe as a separate armed service; in an interview on 9 March 1935, Goering announced the creation of the Luftwaffe and pointed to the Anglo-French proposal for a European air defense treaty as necessitating a German air force so that Germany could enter the agreement as an equal partner.⁴ Despite the official unveiling the Germans persisted in deception. On 14 March 1935, the 132 Fighter Squadron received the unusual designation, Jagdgeschwader Richthofen Nr. 2 (Richthofen Fighter Group No.2).⁵

¹The Washington Naval Treaty provisions for capital ratios stipulated 5-5-3-1.75-1.75 for Britain, the U.S., Japan, France and Italy, respectively. In November the head of the German navy, Admiral Raeder, had broached the subject with the British naval attaché and Hitler mentioned the 35 percent ratio with the British ambassador to Germany, Sir Eric Phipps. Telford Taylor, *Munich: The Price of Peace* (Doubleday: Garden City, N.Y., 1979), p. 220.

²N.H. Gibbs, *Grand Strategy: Vol. I, Rearmament Policy* (HMSO: London, 1976), p. 134.

³E.M. Robertson, *Hitler's Pre-War Policy and Military Plans, 1933-1939* (Longman's: London, 1963), p. 46.

⁴NCAA, V.IV, pp. 995-997.

⁵A staffel was equivalent to a squadron, a geschwader to a group. By unveiling squadrons as groups, Goering created the image of a larger, but still secret, Luftwaffe.

Schliephake argues that a subsequent fly-past over Berlin demonstrated "the presence of a Risikoflotte to clear the way for further rearmament which was then initiated by the proclamation of universal conscription."¹ Confusion over the actual size of the Luftwaffe continued because the planes retained their civil registration markings until June 1936.²

Goering's announcement met with only a tepid response and no formal protest by Britain or France. The French proposed to extend their term of service for conscripts the next day. Hitler announced the German return to conscription on 16 March 1935 to the surprise not only of France and Britain but also of the Army itself.³ Hossbach, Hitler's army adjutant, had supplied Hitler with the figure of 36 divisions almost off the cuff because the Army was already stretched with its current three-fold expansion (from 100,000 to 300,000 men); 36 divisions amounted to 550,000 men. The next day, units of the new air force participated in a "brilliant military celebration."⁴

On 25 March 1935, in response to Simon's repeated questions about the size of the Luftwaffe in a meeting also attended by Eden, Neurath and Ribbentrop, Hitler responded that Germany had reached parity with Britain.⁵ Webster and Frankland suggest that Hitler either "lied or was confused."⁶ Eden contends that "the Führer's claim was certainly false."⁷ Collier asserts that "the claim was certainly not

¹Schliephake, op. cit., p. 34.

²K. A. Merrick, *Luftwaffe Colors Volume I 1935-40* (Arco: New York, 1973), p. 16.

³O'Neill, op. cit., p. 88.

⁴Joachim F. Fest, *Hitler* (Vintage: New York, 1975), p. 490.

⁵DGFP, C, III, p. 1073.

⁶Sir Charles Webster and Noble Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany Vol. I: Preparation* (HMSO: London, 1961), p. 70.

⁷Anthony Eden, *Facing the Dictators* (Houghton Mifflin: Boston, 1962), p. 207.

justified. It was flatly contradicted by secret information in which the Air Ministry had confidence, and also by German officials, who at first denied that the Führer had made so inaccurate a statement."¹

Following Hitler's parity statement, Goering staged a massive demonstration of airpower over Berlin. Over 400 planes participated and Goering had to dip into the ranks of commercial pilots to man the planes. The next day Goering scanned the reports from the military attaches and the foreign newspapers but discovered no adverse and concerted reaction.²

With the parity claim, Hitler may have stretched the truth but the Luftwaffe was fast approaching the level of British strength. Although the Luftwaffe possessed 113 military aircraft deployed in frontline units as of 31 December 1934, it owned 532 altogether. On 1 March 1935, the bomber group II/KG 252 was activated. On 1 April 1935 four bomber groups (KG 535, KG 652, KG 753, and 1./KG 155) and a bomber (3./KG 252) and a fighter (2./JG 136) squadron were formed. Adding the establishment strength of these units to those that existed at the end of 1934 yields a figure close to the lower estimates of British metropolitan strength.

Milch, German Secretary of State for Air, provided the source for Simon's letter of 10 April to MacDonald:

A high official of the German Air Ministry yesterday informed our Air Attaché in Berlin that the precise meaning of the Chancellor's statement to me in Berlin that Germany had "attained air parity with Great Britain" was that Germany's first-line strength had

¹Basil Collier, *The Defence of the United Kingdom* (HMSO: London, 1957).

²Eugene M. Emme, "Emergence of Nazi Luftpolitik as a Weapon in International Affairs," *Airpower Historian*, 7(2), April 1960, p. 104; Farago, op. cit., p. 286.

now reached that of the British frontline strength including machines stationed abroad and in the naval air arm (some 900 machines in all). The regular Royal Air Force squadrons stationed in this country amount to only one half of this figure (453 machines) and even though we have in addition a further force of some 130 machines in the auxiliary squadrons... the German superiority over all firstline machines stationed in United Kingdom aerodromes under Air Ministry control now seems to be some 30 percent. I can see no likely motive for the German Air Ministry deliberately to exaggerate to our Air Attaché the figure of their present air armaments.¹

Whatever the accuracy of Hitler's claim, Simon did not miss the more important points: "Still more disturbing than the *numbers* of first-line military aeroplanes is the information we have from secret sources as to the *speed at which these aeroplanes are being manufactured*."²

Goering substantiated Milch's assertions in an interview with the Air Attaché in Berlin on 22 May 1935 and set parity with France, roughly 2000 aircraft, as a goal for the end of 1935.

When Hitler heard the Anglo-German naval agreement would be signed, he exclaimed on 25 May 1935, "Today is the happiest day of my life. This morning I was informed by my doctor that my throat infection is not serious; and this afternoon I get this tremendous political news."³ Hitler put great stock in this triumph, calling it the "beginning of a new age." The agreement capped his current efforts to conclude an alliance with Britain. Hitler believed "that the British have sought the understanding with us in this area only as the initial step to very much broader cooperation. A German-British combination will be stronger than all other powers together."⁴ Even the date fixed for the signing,

¹Eden, op. cit., p. 205.

²Ibid., pp. 205-6, emphasis in text.

³David Irving, *The War Path*, p. 47.

⁴Fest, op. cit., p. 493.

18 June 1935, conveyed great symbolic importance--the hundred and twentieth anniversary of the defeat of Napoleon by British and Prussian forces at Waterloo.

The terms of the agreement imposed no real limitations on the Germans. The 35 percent ratio allowed the Germans to possess a navy of 425,000 tons greatly in excess of the 86,000 tons the Germans actually had in 1935. Construction programs would not meet the 35 percent levels until the early 1940s. Admiral Raeder, head of the German navy, did not miss the political benefits of the treaty:

This naval agreement was a political success for Germany in that Britain's willingness to substantiate a voluntary agreement in place of the rigid Versailles Treaty conditions not only broke up the so-called "Stresa front" but also sanctioned Germany's right thereafter to rearm. Now, at last, Germany could no longer be justly accused of violating the disarmament conditions of the Treaty of Versailles.¹

Hitler viewed his parity claim as instrumental in facilitating the naval pact. In a conversation with the Austrian State Secretary, Guilo Schmidt, on 19 November 1936, Hitler said:

I have always been the greatest friend of an Anglo-German understanding. The British mentality is a sober one and can be influenced by force only. I experienced this myself when I conferred with Sir Simon [sic] here in Berlin. Only when I assured him that the German Air Force had reached the strength of that of the English were we able to express ourselves with mutual respect; thus our naval agreement came into being.²

Hitler would return to the naval agreement on other occasions. In a conversation with the Rumanian Foreign Minister in April 1939, Hitler argued, "I fight for Germany's just cause. That is why I set limits on myself. I limited myself with respect to England, with whom I have signed a naval agreement. I limited myself with respect to

¹Telford Taylor, *Munich*, p. 222.

²DGFP, D, I, p. 342.

France by renouncing Alsace-Lorraine once and for all."¹ Although this theme of limits rang hollow given the recent Nazi takeover of "Czechia," the importance of the naval agreement and by extension the appearance of force necessary to achieve it came through.

Although Goering announced the Luftwaffe with little fanfare and some trepidation, the Germans paraded their force at every subsequent opportunity. After March 1935, the Germans pursued a general policy of impressing the world with the number and quality of their aircraft and with the capacity and efficiency of their air industry.

The Germans designed their new airfields for show. They clustered the buildings together, making camouflage and expansion difficult.² While constructing official airfields with buildings that reflected Nazi perceptions of grandeur, the Germans continued to prepare clandestine operational bases, unknown to all but a few within the Luftwaffe. A "farm" with the necessary workshop facilities identified these airstrips.³

The Luftwaffe appeared in force at all military demonstrations, party rallies, and international air shows. The displays of military might during the Nuremberg rallies included mock attacks.⁴

The party rallies at Nuremberg, the Harvest Homes Festival, and the annual Armed Forces Day provided numerous opportunities for the Luftwaffe to show its wares. Wilson asserts that virtually all frontline units participated in the Nuremberg rallies before 1938 and performed with the "precision of Frederician Grenadiers" according to the German press.⁵

¹Grigore Gafencu, *Last Days of Europe* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1948), p. 73.

²Ries, op. cit., p. 20.

³Ibid., p. 21.

⁴Schliephake, passim.

⁵H.J.A. Wilson, op. cit., p. 36.

The reoccupation of the Rhineland typified the style of Hitler's tactics in foreign policy: the justifying incident, surprise (even to the military units participating), and deception (to compensate for military ineffectiveness). Originally Hitler had planned to remilitarize the Rhineland in the spring of 1937.¹ The debate about whether to apply oil sanctions against Italy had strained Anglo-French relations. The Franco-Soviet pact which Hitler would use to justify the return to the Rhineland had been signed on 2 May 1935. On 11 February 1936 the French Chamber of Deputies began debate on the pact. On 12 February Hitler returned from a holiday in Bavaria and discussed the need to reoccupy the Rhineland with Fritsch. On 13 February Goebbels instructed the German press not to criticize the Franco-Soviet pact. After the Deputies ratified it on 27 February, Goebbels ordered the press to cease all comment on the pact.² On 2 March, Blomberg issued the directive for the reoccupation and on 5 March set 7 March as the date for the operation.³ The military weakness of the Wehrmacht apparently led Hitler to inquire on 5 March the latest time at which he could call it off. On 12 March, Blomberg lost his nerve and requested that Hitler order the withdrawal of the troops.⁴ Hitler himself viewed these days as the "most nerve-wracking" of his life and confided: "If the French had marched into the Rhineland, we would have had to withdraw with our tails between our legs, for the military resources at our disposal would have been wholly inadequate for even a modest resistance."⁵

Deception obscured the military unpreparedness of the Wehrmacht. The German deception program contributed to the French overestimating German strength in the Rhineland at 265,000 even though only three battalions participated.⁶ Into the zone flew squadrons of aircraft

¹ James Thomas Emmerson, *The Rhineland Crisis* (Iowa State University Press: Ames, Iowa, 1977), p. 34.

² Ibid., pp. 91-93.

³ O'Neill, op. cit., pp. 128-9.

⁴ Ibid., p. 129.

⁵ Fest, op. cit., p. 497.

⁶ O'Neill, op. cit., p. 129. The French counted the 150,000 men in SA units as capable of resistance.

which the Germans repainted and flew continuously over the cities of Cologne, Worms, and Mainz.¹ The aircraft could not fight; their guns had not yet been synchronized to fire through the propeller.² The claims of the previous year had influenced British and French perceptions of German strength.³ The actual deception during the reoccupation merely substantiated the impression already conveyed of a militarily strong Germany. Blomberg and Hitler's nerves confirmed that German military capability was more appearance than reality.

The Germans continued their policy of showcasing their mass production facilities, especially Heinkel's He-111 plant at Marienhe. Lindbergh visited Germany frequently and in 1936 made his famous comment: "It must never come to an air war between Germany, England, and America. Only the Russians would profit by it."⁴ Hitler himself would voice this theme in 1939. A member of the Luftwaffe later commented on these visits by Lindbergh and others:

Naturally we were aware of the fact that these officers were expected to furnish their espionage chiefs with reports, which were forwarded through diplomatic channels without being censored by German authorities, and...would...ultimately reach the top government circles of all the major powers. On the other hand, these foreign officers were presumably unaware of the fact that their German hosts deliberately kept them from seeing Germany's top achievements. ...In addition to the systematic bluff organized at top level, there was also willing self-deception of the foreign air observers, who simply refused to believe what their eyes saw and insisted on assuming that there was still more hidden behind it. They had no way of knowing that many of the gigantic hangars they were shown were either completely empty or filled with ancient dust-covered aircraft.⁵

¹Irving, *Rise and Fall*, p. 46; Schliephake, op. cit., p. 41.

²Irving, *Rise and Fall*, p. 46. Milch learned of the operation only on 6 March when Wever recalled him to Berlin. Therefore Milch did not have a hand in this deception.

³The British Secretary of State for Air during March 1935, Lord Londonderry, often visited Goering at his hunting lodge, Karinhalle. Londonderry repeatedly requested assurances of the correctness of Hitler's parity claim. Paul Schmidt, *Hitler's Interpreter* (Macmillan: London, 1951).

⁴Ernst Heinkel, *Stormy Life* (Dutton: New York, 1956), p. 166.

⁵Heinz Riechoff, cited in Suchenwirth, op. cit., p. 190.

The parity statement, Baldwin's admission that the British government had erred in its estimates of German strength, and the Rhineland hoax had their effect. Enormous exaggerations of German air strength began to appear in the British press.¹ During the summer of 1936, Lord Swinton informed Milch that the British would like to receive detailed information of German air rearmament.² Wishing to undercut the excesses of the British press and the influence they had on British policy, Milch sought and received permission from Hitler to exchange information with the British.³

In late January 1937, Air Vice-Marshal Courtney headed a British mission to Germany. Milch showed them all German aircraft and facilities and provided detailed performance information.⁴ An agreement was drawn up in writing to exchange further information.⁵ To Courtney alone and with the proviso that the information not go beyond the British Air Ministry, Milch, in an elaborately staged episode, provided the basic data on the 1934 construction program. These figures showed that Germany would have 1755 first-line aircraft by September 1938, compared with British strength at 1736. These revelations obviously appalled the then Chief of Staff of the Luftwaffe, Albert Kesselring, who denounced Milch to Goering for treason.⁶ Milch's show obviously had the sanction of Goering and Hitler because Milch remained in his post. Kesselring's indignations demonstrated that even he, as Chief of Staff, remained ignorant of the deception.

¹Even Churchill objected to the exaggerations he found in the press. He chided Lord Rothermere, the publisher of *The Daily Mail*, on 29 April 1935 that quoting "fantastic" figures would only deprive Rothermere of "enormous credit" otherwise due him for recognizing the German threat. Martin Gilbert, op. cit., p. 260.

²Eden, op. cit., p. 547; Ian Colvin, *Vansittart in Office* (Gollancz: London, 1965), p. 133.

³Irving, *Rise and Fall*, p. 52.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Allied Control Authority for Germany, *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal* (hereafter cited as IMT), Vol. IX (Nuremberg, Germany, 1947), p. 74.

⁶Irving, *Rise and Fall*, p. 52.

Prior to receiving Milch's figures, the British Cabinet had been weighing the need to speed air rearmament. Although Milch's data showed that the British could achieve rough parity with their current rearmament program, the number of German heavy bombers would reach 810 while Britain could attain only 210.¹ Milch's deception supported the current British program but economic factors carried greater weight. In Cabinet debate of 3 February 1937, Chamberlain warned of "the dangers of overloading the programmes beyond the material capacity of the country."² Nevertheless, Colvin thinks that Milch acted with full knowledge of the British budget cycle:

And that no doubt was the objective of deception. Once the British estimates were presented to Parliament in March, it would be much harder to obtain parliamentary approval for increases, whereas German air production could be secretly accelerated at the stroke of a pen.³

Vansittart received information that contradicted Milch's assertions in the summer of 1937 and passed it on to the Air Ministry. He wrote on 30 June 1937 that "it was quite obvious that Milch was lying from the start, and I pointed this out at the time. The *mise-en-scène* was so childish that I could never understand how anybody could be taken in by it."

An Air Staff memorandum of 8 October 1937 indicated: "In January 1937, General Milch informed the Deputy Chief of the Air Staff in confidence that Germany intended to build up an Air Force of 180 squadrons (excluding coastal units) to be completed by the autumn of 1938. This was equivalent to only 1620 first-line aircraft, and was therefore a surprisingly modest aim. General Milch, however, qualified his statement by adding that the German plan might be accelerated or expanded further if the political situation so required."

¹The Germans at this time had no plans to mass-produce "heavy" bombers. I will discuss the British and French reaction to German deception in a future paper.

²Norman Gibbs, op. cit., pp. 597-8.

³Colvin, op. cit., p. 134.

Lord Swinton, British Air Minister, noted on 27 October: "Events have shown that General Milch was not in fact telling the truth."¹

Milch returned Courtney's visit in October 1937 and admitted that Germany had already achieved the figures in the 1934 program originally set for September 1938. Swinton argued for a new rearmament program to meet German rearmament:

As regards the future, General Milch said that he hoped to use the next year or 18 months in "consolidation." But he at once proceeded to an extensive qualification of this intention. During the period Germany "might increase the strength of squadrons from 12 to 15 or 18 aircraft." This in itself would constitute a 50 percent expansion of the Force. He further added: "General Goering is a man of big ideas and somewhat American in his outlook; and he might suddenly say 'Double the Air Force.' If that happened I should have to carry out his orders."

General Milch promised that if an expansion of either kind took place, we should be informed. Judging by the past, I cannot place much reliance on this undertaking; and I think the information would be given after and not before the event; or at best when considerable progress has been made. Moreover, the fact that General Milch referred to doubling the Air Force in the way he did convinces me that this is already planned, though the date of execution may be uncertain. It will be observed that the doubling of the Force corresponds exactly with the forecast of the Air Staff in the attached Memorandum. In all the circumstances I do not feel that we can safely count on a German expansion less than that which General Milch has envisaged as possible, and which the Air Staff regard as probable.²

The British knew that Milch had fooled them and did nothing. Only after Anschluss in March 1938 did the British initiate a new rearmament program to meet the revised estimates of German projected strength.

Meanwhile, the Germans conducted a staff and command post exercise that involved deception of a different sort. In 1937 the Luftwaffe carried out an exercise to determine the speed with which they could

¹ Martin Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 843

² Gibbs, *op. cit.*, pp. 597-8.

deploy their forces. The exercise simulated a war with Czechoslovakia. To disguise the exercise's intent, the Luftwaffe used maps with altered place names and set up a dummy radio network in northern Germany to convey the impression that the exercise was between northern and southern Germany.¹ When it came to operational matters, the Luftwaffe preferred not to telegraph its punches. German deception did not always try to impress foreign observers.

Most of the Luftwaffe deceptions involved attempts to exaggerate the numbers and capabilities of the aircraft. The Chief Engineer of Bristol Aeroplane Company visited the facility in June and September of 1937. In a letter to Churchill dated 5 October 1937, he wrote, "I am absolutely shattered at the tremendous progress of aircraft and engine production in Germany, not from a technical aspect so much as in quantity and organization. What they are doing is quite astounding."²

The German press trumpeted that during the July 1937 International Military Aircraft Competition at Zurich the Do 17 V8 succeeded in out-running all the fighters. The Do 17, called the "Flying Pencil," seemed to vindicate the theory that bombers had outpaced fighters through speed. The prototype that flew at Zurich had special DB 600A, 1000 horsepower engines that allowed it to fly at 280 miles per hour.³ The production model Do 17 used 775 hp BMW VI engines with a maximum speed of 193 mph. at 13,120 feet (the Gloster Gauntlet, the frontline British interceptor in 1937, attained a maximum speed of 230 mph at 15,800 feet).⁴

A modified Junkers 88, V5, also promoted the image of the Schnellbomber. This aircraft set a 621 mile closed circuit record of 321.25 mph carrying a load of two metric tons. Four months later, it carried the same load, 1,242.7 miles at a speed that averaged 311 mph.⁵ The speed of these bombers emphasized the vulnerability of Germany's opponents. Bombers faster than fighters augured poorly for air defense. Thus the Luftwaffe appeared very formidable indeed.

¹Suchenwirth, op. cit., pp. 174-5.

²Gilbert, op. cit., p. 871.

³Mason, op. cit., pp. 239-240; Green, op. cit., pp. 113-5.

⁴Green, op. cit., p. 117.

⁵Ibid., p. 449.

The Wehrmacht put on quite a show in its September 1937 maneuvers. The centerpiece involved an attack by 800 tanks and 400 planes. The British general in attendance, Ironside, noted in his diary on 27 September:

I think that the German Army has developed in a marvelous way. It is madly enthusiastic and very efficient...Everybody watching this effort is terrified, and I am sure nothing will stand up to it when the moment comes...

Ironside, however, concluded with: "There is no danger now but there will be in, say, five years."¹

In their 1937 maneuvers the Germans applied some of the lessons from their experience in Spain. These maneuvers provided the Wehrmacht with the opportunity to exercise all elements of the armed forces. The Luftwaffe even flew strategic missions. The "red" air force attacked military and industrial targets in the Berlin area on 20 September but suffered heavy losses from defenses. The "blue" force counterattacked against airfields, transportation facilities and ports. An attack on the "blue" capital of Berlin on the night of the 20th led to a retaliation on the "red" capital of Hannover on the 21st. "Blue" air superiority contributed greatly to the victory of its ground forces.² The strategic use of airpower during these maneuvers lent credence to subsequent threats by Hitler and Goering to lay waste to such cities as London, Paris, and Prague.

BULLYING

On 5 November 1937, Hitler's speech to the Wehrmacht senior commands and the Foreign Minister signaled a change in Hitler's policy towards Great Britain. Hitler did not mention the possibility of an alliance with England but did detail the factors undermining the British Empire. He dismissed the possibility that Britain would intervene and without Britain, France would not aid Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, Hitler wished to avoid French participation:

¹Ironside, op. cit., pp. 26-31.

²Ries, op. cit., p. 183.

The German question can be solved only by way of force, and this is never without risk. The battles of Frederick the Great for Silesia, and Bismarck's wars against Austria and France had been a tremendous risk and the speed of Prussian action in 1870 had prevented Austria from participating in the war. If we place the decision to apply force with risk at the head of the following expositions [a listing of three circumstances under which Germany could attack Czechoslovakia], then we are left to reply to the questions "when" and "how."¹

Hitler also viewed that Germany only had a short time-window within which to achieve its objectives. After 1943-45, Germany could "only expect a change for the worse." The programs for rearmament were nearing completion and continued delay threatened obsolescence of current equipment and countermeasures by opponents. "While other nations isolate themselves we should be forced on the offensive." Demographic and economic factors leave "us no other choice but to act."²

This conference sheds some light on several of Hitler's tactics. Time was working against Germany so Hitler must exploit each opportunity that arose. Action must be swift to avoid intervention because Germany possessed sufficient strength to deal with its opponents only one at a time. By projecting strength greater than the actual, deception greatly aided this campaign against intervention by third parties.

To cap the change in his policy, Hitler exploited a questionable marriage by Reichswehr Minister Blomberg and some phony charges against the Army Commander-in-Chief Fritsch to purge the Army high command of conservatives. In February 1938, Hitler finished the job by cleaning house at the Foreign Ministry, replacing Neurath with Ribbentrop. Blomberg, Fritsch and Neurath had each expressed reservations about the risks involved with Hitler's policy.³ With the conservatives gone, Hitler had complete control over the Army in his new position as Supreme Commander and Minister of War. The time for opinions contrary to the Führer's had vanished.

¹NCAA, op. cit., p. 300.

²Ibid., pp. 300-301.

³Taylor, *Munich*, pp. 315-330.

The German takeover of Austria followed the pattern of the earlier coups. Hitler exploited the opportunity given him by the Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg. During talks with Schuschnigg on 12 February 1938, Hitler resorted to some crude theater. Hitler required a guarantee for legal Nazi activities in Austria. Schuschnigg refused. Hitler summoned General Keitel, Chief of the OKW (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht) and told Schuschnigg that he would deal with Schuschnigg later. Keitel asked Hitler what he wanted. Hitler said nothing except for Keitel to sit and wait. After a few minutes Hitler summoned Schuschnigg to return. Suitably impressed, Schuschnigg agreed to the guarantees.¹

To maintain pressure on Schuschnigg Hitler ordered Keitel to initiate military demonstrations and other deceptive measures along the Austrian border. Keitel, Goebbels, Canaris (Chief of Intelligence for the OKW) participated in planning these operations, which included:

airplane flights and mountain troop exercises at the border, "phony" radio traffic between Berlin and Munich, and the spreading of rumors--such as the suspension of troop furloughs, the assemblage of rolling stock in southern Germany, and the recall of General-lieutenant Muff to Berlin...²

Colonel Jodl noted in his diary on 14 February that these measures had had created "in Austria the impression that Germany is undertaking serious military preparations."³ Although these preparations apparently fooled no one, they did precede the actual takeover in March.⁴ Thus, an actual invasion followed the deception to feign one.

Away from Hitler and uncowed by the threat of an invasion, Schuschnigg suffered a change of heart and decided to call a plebiscite to garner support for this position. The wording of the referendum

¹Taylor, *Munich*, pp. 345-6; IMT, X, pp. 504-5.

²Telford Taylor, *Sword and Swastika* (Simon and Schuster: New York, 1952), pp. 180-1; Höhne, op. cit., pp. 274-5.

³Taylor, *Munich*, p. 181.

⁴Suchenwirth, op. cit., p. 193; IMT, X, pp. 504-5.

would have guaranteed a heavy yes vote. Words of Schuschnigg's plans found Hitler on 9 March 1938 and he "was determined not to tolerate it."¹ Hitler's orders to prepare an invasion caught the Army by surprise. Keitel lamented:

The next night [10-11 March] was hell for me. There was telephone call after telephone call from the Army General Staff, from Brauchitsch and finally about 4:00 a.m. from the Chief of the OKW Operations Staff, General von Viebahn, all imploring me to work on the Führer to give up the move in to Austria. I had not the slightest intention even of putting the question to the Führer, I promised to do so and shortly afterwards without having done it rang back to say that he had refused. The Führer never knew anything about all this; if he had, his opinion of the Army Chiefs would have been shattering and I wanted to save both sides that experience.²

This passage underscores Hitler's isolation from the Army and his ability to order operations without adequate planning. The General Staff issued orders on 11 March to move on 12 March. "So improvised was the operation that the tanks relied on refueling from Austrian motor garages on the way to Vienna, while the commander of the Second Panzer Division had nothing more than a Baedeker's Guide to Austria to assist him to plan the route to Vienna."³

The Luftwaffe used more than frontline units to promote their image during the occupation of Austria in March 1938. Elements of the Bavarian flying schools joined the regular units in dropping propaganda leaflets on Austrian towns. The Transport group ferried troops, a band and swastika flags to Vienna to participate in the parade staged for Hitler on 15 March.⁴

¹Taylor, *Munich*, pp. 352-6.

²O'Neill, op. cit., p. 151.

³Ibid., p. 152.

⁴Ries, op. cit., pp. 185-195.

Hitler reveled in the Austrian success which vindicated his decisive moves when opportunity arose: "There is but one moment when the Goddess of Fortune passes by, and if you don't grasp her by the hem, you won't get a second chance."¹

The Anschluss produced jittery nerves for the intelligence services. The Austrians had properly diagnosed the apparent threat of a German invasion as a deception. Nevertheless, the Germans invaded. In May, both Czech and British intelligence interpreted German troop movements and concentrations as preparations for an invasion. The Germans did conduct joint Army-Luftwaffe maneuvers at Thuringia during the week of 15 to 23 May and had stationed an unusual number of troops at the Königsbrück training ground, but Hitler had had no intention of using these activities as a cover to invade Czechoslovakia. The deception that threatened Austria had conditioned the British and the Czech interpretations. When the German State Secretary of the Foreign Ministry told the British ambassador to Berlin that the reports of invasion were "absolutely nonsense," Henderson replied that denials during the Austrian crisis had proven false.

The British and French both warned against a German attack. The Germans did not move because they had never intended to. The appearance of a British and French diplomatic victory angered Hitler. Henderson reported that German resentment ran deep because of "ready acceptance all over the world of the theory that Germany concentrated troops with the intention of attacking Czechoslovakia and was only restrained by energetic action of England" and "general jubilation at diplomatic defeat of Germany and rebuff to Herr Hitler."²

The change in the Fall Green directive--the attack plan against Czechoslovakia--underscores Hitler's reaction. The directive dated 20 May 1938 stated:

It is not my intention to destroy Czechoslovakia through military action in the near future without provocation. Therefore inevitable political

¹David Irving, *The War Path*, p. 87.

²Taylor, *Munich*, p. 393.

developments *inside* Czechoslovakia must force the issue, or political events in Europe create an especially possible opportunity that may never recur.¹

The directive dated 30 May 1938 signified a dramatic change in attitude:

It is my unalterable decision to destroy Czechoslovakia by military action within the foreseeable future. It is the responsibility for the political leadership to determine or bring about the politically and militarily suitable moment.²

Hitler would avenge this diplomatic defeat on the Czechs. The deception campaign against the Austrians in March bore some strange fruit indeed.

Meanwhile the efforts of the Propaganda Ministry continued to tell on the British. In June 1938, *The Times* reported that the Germans possessed a four engine bomber with a payload of 11,000 pounds.³ In fact, the Germans had postponed their strategic bomber program because of inadequate engines.⁴ In July, the *Manchester Guardian* reported that the Luftwaffe expansion would enhance the prospects of Germany's success in a "lightning flash war," an obvious reference to the German concept of blitzkrieg.⁵

German deception appeared at its best during the visit of the head of the French Air Force, General Vuillemin, in August 1938. The French Air Attaché to Berlin, Paul Stehlin described the show as "a pageant of German military power calculated to kill any French intention to use its admittedly weak air force, even though it was the only way that Czechoslovakia could be given immediate aid."⁶

¹Ibid., p. 389, emphasis in text.

²Ibid., p. 394.

³John Wood, *The "Luftwaffe" as a Factor in British Policy, 1935-1939* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation: Tulane University, 1965).

⁴The Germans had used the two prototypes of the Ju-89 to set payload for height records. The normal statistics on the Ju-89 would have not generated much excitement--a payload of 3520 pounds, a range of 995 miles, and a cruising speed of 196 mph. Green, op. cit., p. 484. Goering had canceled the Ju-89 program on 29 April 1937. The poor performance of Ju-89 and Do-19 led Goering to postpone development of a four engine bomber until adequate engines became available. Schliephake, op. cit., pp. 58-9.

⁵Wood., op. cit., p. 250.

⁶Taylor, *Munich*, pp. 719-20.

Vuillemin began the visit with his own small deception by arriving in an Amiot 340, a prototype bomber that the French had painted with operational military colors.¹ Udet and Milch guided Vuillemin on a tour of the modern Heinkel factories in Marienhe and Orenienburg, treating him to row on row of He-111s ready for delivery. As Heinkel recounts, "As he was lead through the vast air raid shelters and found everything ready, even down to ten sharpened pencils on every desk, Vuillemin muttered, 'Je suis écrasé.'"2

Udet took Vuillemin up in a Fiesler Storch, a slow observation plane. A He-100, one of three prototypes built to capture the world record but outfitted in operational markings, buzzed the Storch. After the shaken Vuillemin had arrived on the ground, Milch turned to French and said, "This is the latest German fighter which Udet used to break the 60-mile speed record." Turning to Udet, Milch asked, "Tell me, Udet, how far are we with mass production?" Udet responded, "The second production line is ready and the third will be in two weeks."³

Because the He-100 represented the second effort by Heinkel to replace the Bf-109 as the standard German fighter, Udet and Milch's performance encouraged Heinkel to ask Udet, "When will you put the He-100 into mass production?"

Udet muttered, "This sales talk is part of the show. We must talk so fast that none of them will even dream of making war on us."⁴

Even though Vuillemin had answered Goering's query about French response to a German attack on Czechoslovakia with France "would be faithful to her word," Vuillemin later repeated his opinion that the Germans could wipe out the French air force in two weeks.⁵

¹Green, op. cit., p. 334.

²Heinkel, op. cit., pp. 180-181.

³Ibid., p. 181. The He-100 as the He-112U appeared in operational guise during the Battle of Britain. The Germans released pictures of planes with markings that indicated as many as 36 planes in a squadron. William Green, "Heinkel's Hoaxer," *RAF Flying Review*, Vol. XVIII, No.5, 1961, pp. 3577.

⁴Heinkel, op. cit.

⁵Taylor, *Munich*, p. 120.

During the midst of the Munich crisis in September 1938, Goering could not resist bragging to Henderson: "If England makes war on Germany, no one knows what the ultimate end will be. But one thing is certain. Before the war is over there will be very few Czechs left alive and little London left standing." As an apparent throwaway, Goering indicated that the Luftwaffe possessed more aircraft than Britain, France, Belgium and Czechoslovakia combined.¹

The pretext of maneuvers and exercises disguised the movements of the Luftwaffe in preparation for the assault on Czechoslovakia.² On 26 September 1938, Hitler ordered the troops which had just arrived at their jumping-off bases to move a day's march farther from the border. The next day Hitler ordered them to return to their deployment areas. Despite the best efforts of the German command the basic premise of the plan for attack on Czechoslovakia in which "the surprising element is the most important factor" had been compromised.³ The Munich agreement of 30 September precluded the necessity of attacking an alerted and mobilized Czechoslovakia.

The first flights on 1 October 1938 collected information on the operational airfields. Bad weather prevented anything except reconnaissance flights until 5 October when propaganda flights began.⁴

The British did not miss the value of the Luftwaffe as a political instrument, whatever its value militarily. Henderson wrote London on 12 October 1938:

The conclusion to be reached is that the Germans, if they do not intend to commit an act of aggression on us, propose to use their air force as a big stick to enforce a 'Pax Germanica.'⁵

¹ John Wheeler-Bennett, *Munich: Prologue to Tragedy* (Duell, Sloan, and Pearce: New York, 1948), pp. 128-140.

² Ries, op. cit., p. 200.

³ Taylor, *Munich*, p. 896.

⁴ Ries, op. cit., p. 205-206.

⁵ DBFP, 3, III, pp. 616-617.

On 10 November 1938, Hitler commended the German press for its role in the recent crisis. Hitler thought that German propaganda had thoroughly demoralized the Czechs:

Almost every day I have been able to ascertain the true impact of our propaganda, but particularly the impact of our press propaganda. As I said, it is success that counts...I myself became aware of the enormity of this success when I stood for the first time in the middle of the Czech fortifications. Then and there I realized what it means to take possession of fortifications representing a front of almost 2000 kilometers long without firing a single shot of live ammunition. Gentlemen, this time, by means of propaganda in the service of an idea, we have obtained 10 million human beings with 100,000 square kilometers of land.¹

At the operational level, the Germans did not share French and British assessments about the effectiveness of the German air force to perform strategic missions. Ordered to provide a study for operations against England on 23 August 1938, the head of Luftwaffe Fleet 2, General Felmy, reported on 22 September that the Germans needed bases in the Low Countries in order for the attack to succeed, that the planes lacked the range and the crews the training to perform the strategic mission. Only by reducing their bomb load could the medium bombers reach English targets.² He concluded:

With the means available we cannot expect to achieve more than a disruptive effect. Whether this will lead to an erosion of the British will to fight depends on imponderable and certainly unpredictable factors. With the means now at hand a war of annihilation (*Vernichtungskrieg*) against England is out of the question.³

This report met with Goering's displeasure:

I have not asked for a memorandum weighing the existing possibilities of success and pointing out our weaknesses; these things I myself know best of all. What I requested is information on the manner

¹ Z.A.B. Zeman, *Nazi Propaganda* (Oxford University Press: New York, 1973, 2nd ed.).

² Homze, op. cit., pp. 181-191.

³ Taylor, *Munich*, p. 865.

in which you expect to obtain maximum effect with the projected resources, and what conditions you require for that purpose.¹

Subsequent studies by the Luftwaffe General Staff in 1939 confirmed Felmy's assessments.²

Goering and Milch continued to emphasize the great value of the air force in achieving political objectives. On 1 March 1939 during the fourth annual German Air Force Day, Goering argued that Munich had succeeded because of the fear of German airpower. He assured the crowd that the trigger could be pulled: "One command--and a hell, an inferno, would have been made of the enemy; a short blow but his destruction would have been complete." Continuing in this theme, Goering warned that the world would see more of the same:

I am proud that the German air force has served the creative statesmanship of the Führer as a powerful striking weapon. I know, too, that our splendid service has played an extremely important role in the calculations of warmongering foreign 'emagogues and that it will continue to play that role. Peace cannot be wrested from the strong as it once was from the weak. It would be delusion to be satisfied with the success already gained. That would be a step backwards.³

Goering knew very well from Felmy's assessments that the Luftwaffe could not seriously threaten England.

The rump state of Czechoslovakia became the next object of Goering and Hitler's air diplomacy. On 15 March 1939, to induce President Hacha to sign over "Czechia," Goering threatened, "If you do not, half Prague will be lying in ruins within two hours."⁴ At Nuremberg, Goering denied that he intended to bomb Prague, arguing that "resistance could always be broken more easily without such bombing."⁵

¹Ibid., p. 866.

²Homze, op. cit., pp. 242-6.

³Wood, op. cit., p. 312.

⁴Wheeler-Bennett, op. cit., p. 344.

⁵IMT, op. cit., p. 303.

The Luftwaffe again used the Czechoslovakian occupation to conduct propaganda flights. Six Geschwaders (roughly totaling 250 aircraft) participated.¹

Against the background of these political events, the Propaganda Ministry exploited the competition between Heinkel and Messerschmitt for the air speed record to promote the technical capabilities of the Luftwaffe. The Luftwaffe had opted for the Bf-109 over Heinkel's He-112 as the standard fighter and now Heinkel had developed the He-100 that Udet and Milch had used to deceive Vuillemin before Munich. On 6 June 1938, Udet used the He-100 to set the 60 mile course record of 394.4 mph. The Propaganda Ministry billed the aircraft as the He-112U when in fact it was the He-100 V2 and withheld all clear photographs of the aircraft to aid in the deception.² On 30 March 1939, the He-100 V8, again billed as the He-112U, set the absolute speed record of 463.92 mph.³

Meanwhile Messerschmitt had been working on his own airplane to capture the absolute speed record. On 26 April 1939, the Me-209 V2, billed as the Me-109R, captured the record with a flight of 469.22 mph.⁴ Both the He-100 and the Me-209 differed considerably from the He-112 and the Bf-109, the operational fighters they imitated for the records.

The Me-209 had flown under "pampered" circumstances to achieve its record and Heinkel wanted another attempt with his He-112U, née He-100. Udet canceled the attempt and later explained to Heinkel that "it simply won't do for the rest of the world for a fighter like the He-100, which is not mass produced, to hold the record and the Me-109, which everyone knows is our standard fighter, not to. That is all there is to it, and I don't like your new idea of another record attempt."⁵

¹Ries, op. cit., p. 209.

²Green, *Warplanes*, p. 332; Heinkel, op. cit., pp. 177-9.

³Green, *Warplanes*, p. 332.

⁴Ibid., p. 334; Martin Caidin, *Me-109: Willy Messerschmitt's Peerless Fighter* (Ballantine: New York, 1969).

⁵Heinkel, op. cit., p. 184.

The move into the Czechoslovakian rump state had sufficiently disturbed the Rumanians that they sought an Anglo-French guarantee as well. On his way to London, the Rumanian Foreign Minister, Gafencu, called on Hitler and Goering. On 19 April 1939, Hitler lamented that he was still mystified by British policy:

The English are determined not to understand. Instead of coming to an agreement with us, as I have so often proposed to them, they insist on blocking our path and seeking a quarrel with us. They do not admit our political power...We wish England, whose empire we respect, to respect in turn our own sphere of interest, and the space without which we cannot live.¹

Despite his affection for England, Hitler would fight if necessary:

...If England wants war, it will have it. It won't be so easy a war as it thinks, nor one on the old pattern...it will be a war of destruction beyond belief...We shall astound the world with our methods and inventions. So on what do they rely to hold us in check? Their air force? They may succeed in bombarding a few towns, but how can they measure up to us? Our air force leads the world, and no enemy town will be left standing.²

Hitler then made a statement that echoed Lindbergh's earlier comment to Heinkel, "In the end, victor or vanquished, we shall all be buried in the same ruins; and the only one who will profit is that man in Moscow."³ Hitler despaired that he had to contemplate such a conflict, "entirely on account of the incomprehension and blind obduracy of the leaders of Great Britain."⁴

Gafencu relayed the substance of his meetings with Hitler to Lord Halifax, the British Foreign Minister, and Chamberlain. The Prime Minister responded "with a frown: 'He is a liar.'"⁵

Despite his public pronouncements, Hitler himself suffered under little illusions about the military value of the "knockout" blow.

¹Gafencu, op. cit., p. 76.

²Ibid., p. 78.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 79.

⁵Ibid., p. 113.

Hitler thought that the British fleet as a protector of Britain's food supply posed a better target to ensure Britain's defeat:

The moment England's food supply routes are cut she is forced to capitulate. The import of food and fuel depends on the fleet's protection.

If the German Air Force attacks English territory, England will not be forced to capitulate in one day. But if the fleet is destroyed, immediate capitulation will be the result...

A country cannot be brought to defeat by an Air Force. It is impossible to attack all objectives simultaneously and the lapse of time of a few¹ minutes would evoke defensive counter-measures.

These comments reflected Hitler's thinking on 23 May 1939.

Despite real questions among the military about the strength of the Western fortifications, the Propaganda Ministry orchestrated a series of efforts to project the image of an "impregnable West Wall." In June 1939, for example, the Propaganda Ministry sent the *Frankfurter Zeitung* the following:

Important directive Politics 14th June.

Please publish the following news in the Reich edition on the second page and without any special emphasis...The best way would be to print it for instance as second item in the column "From the Reich," if the column happens to be on page 2... We alone are carrying this news item. The other papers will not take it over, with the exception of the *Börsenzeitung*, which will do so tomorrow as a quotation from the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. It should originate from Frankfurt in the manner in which we are used to print news from Frankfurt. The news item must not be changed, above all the introduction must run: "As we learn from Group Command 2 of the Army." The whole thing originates, of course, in the Press Department. Please confirm in the course of the day that the news will be published as desired.²

This directive illustrates the care which the Propaganda Ministry exercised in manipulating the news. The news item on the *West Wall* read:

¹NCAA, Vol. VII, pp. 847-854.

²Bramsted, op. cit., p. 141.

Frankfurt, 14 June 1939. As we learn from Group Command 2 of the Army, in the near future larger exercises will begin in the Western fortifications by the army formations destined for their occupation. The maneuvers will take some time and will take place along the entire Western frontier. They have the purpose of training the troops for fighting and living in fortifications.¹

The German Army and French intelligence did not share the high opinion of the German Western fortifications held by Hitler and the French commander-in-chief, Gamelin. When presented with reports that questioned the defensive value of the West Wall, Gamelin dismissed them as products beyond the competence of his air attachés in Berlin.²

When Hitler heard that General Adam, the Commander of the Western Fortifications, believed that the West Wall would not hold the French longer than three weeks, he exclaimed, "That position can be held for not only three weeks but for three years; the man who does not hold these fortifications is a scoundrel!"³ Hitler ignored Adam's fears, turned construction over to the Todt organization and announced at Nuremberg that Germany would finish the West Wall before winter.⁴ On 28 August 1938, Hitler inspected the West Wall and proclaimed, "I am convinced that German troops can never be shot out of these positions. The next day Hitler proclaimed: "Only a scoundrel could not hold this front!...I only regret that I am Führer and Chancellor, and not C-in-C Western Front!"⁵ At Nuremberg, Jodl felt the West Wall inadequate during the Munich crisis:

It was entirely out of the question, with five fighting divisions and seven armored divisions in the western fortifications, which was nothing but a large construction site to keep 100 French divisions at bay. From a military point of view that was impossible.⁶

¹Ibid., pp. 141-2.

²Taylor, *Munich*, p. 854.

³O'Neill, op. cit., pp. 159-160.

⁴Taylor, *Munich*, Irving, *The War Path*, pp. 118-122.

⁵Irving, *The War Path*, pp. 127-128.

⁶Fest, op. cit., p. 566.

The Germans fabricated an incident to justify the attack on Poland. Hitler had refused Manstein's (Chief of Staff of Army Group South) proposal to launch a surprise attack with troops dressed in Polish uniforms. Heydrich, head of the national police, the SD, picked up on this idea and decided to stage an attack by Germans dressed in Polish uniforms against other SD men posing as border guards. Concentration camps would produce the necessary corpses to establish authenticity. "Actual proof of Polish attacks is essential," Heydrich claimed, "both for the foreign press and for German propaganda."¹

Hitler had set 26 August 1939 as the date for the attack on Poland. Before Hitler called off the operation on 25 August, Heydrich's fake Poles had already left. Fighting broke out between the fake Poles and the fake defenders before they received word that the invasion of Poland had been postponed. They repeated the charade in the early morning of 1 September. This time the invasion continued.

¹Höhne, op. cit., p. 339.

IV. THE METHODS AND ORGANIZATION OF GERMAN DECEPTION

The organization of German deception reflected Hitler's tactics in foreign policy--opportunism in service of long-range objectives. Hitler himself possessed only a vague sense of the military effectiveness of the Luftwaffe. Its political potential mattered more and Hitler used the Luftwaffe where he thought appropriate. In fact, the need to promote the Luftwaffe as a large force undermined attempts to increase its military efficacy. Before 3 September 1939, the Luftwaffe would suffice in combat against each of Hitler's proposed opponents alone. The British and French declarations of war on 3 September marked the defeat of Hitler's policy to defeat his opponents one by one. The image of the invincible Luftwaffe to deter intervention continued. Germany made the first move to end the "phony war" in May 1940.

The techniques and the participants in the successive German deceptions varied. Clearly the architects of the Luftwaffe, Goering, Milch, and Wever (the first Luftwaffe chief of staff) realized the need to project an image of a strong Luftwaffe, the risk air force to cover rearmament. Goering and Milch also knew that the image of a strong Luftwaffe, effective in winning foreign policy objectives, would aid them in the competition for scarce funds and raw materials. The Propaganda Ministry, on the other hand, indiscriminately promoted German technology and military capabilities. The Army viewed deception as a necessary tool in the operational kit.

The purposes and techniques of German deceptions varied. The Propaganda Ministry exploited "natural" deceptions such as the competition between Heinkel and Messerschmitt. Operational deceptions preceded such foreign policy coups as the Rhineland and Austrian occupations. A general policy of promoting the Luftwaffe aided the strategic deception, first to gain "equality of rights" for Germany and second to forestall intervention by third parties.

WHAT DID HITLER KNOW AND WHEN DID HE KNOW IT?

Hitler possessed only a rudimentary knowledge of the Luftwaffe and relied heavily on Goering for information. Hitler needed the image of a strong Germany that a large, modern air force would provide. The

actual details and whether the Luftwaffe could fight a war mattered very little to Hitler. This penchant for the appearance but not the reality of a strong Luftwaffe led to a fixation on numbers that would serve Germany poorly in World War II.

What's Good for the Gander

Hitler did not involve himself with operational planning in the Army before he assumed his position as Supreme Commander in February 1938 and with operations in the Luftwaffe until 1943. Heinkel describes a session on 23 May 1943 in which Hitler said:

I summoned you here to prevent any interference by Goering or Milch. I want to obtain a personal picture of the technical situation, and one that is not distorted by the gentlemen of the Luftwaffe. Until today, I have never interfered in Luftwaffe questions because Goering produced the strongest air arm in the world and I wished to demonstrate my utmost confidence in it. However, the terrible disappointment of the past two years, and an endless chain of information and promises that have proved to be false, have compelled me to take this direct approach.¹

Goering also possessed a poor understanding of the technical problems of the Luftwaffe. The ignorance of both Hitler and Goering made them susceptible to the demonstration that Udet and Milch conducted for them at the Rechlin experimental testing station on 3 July 1939.

Hitler and Goering became victims to their own sense of the Luftwaffe's prowess. In April 1939, Milch, concerned that the Luftwaffe would not get sufficient priority in rearmament, proposed to Goering that they must show the Luftwaffe's latest wares to Hitler: "The Luftwaffe must make use of such a display to win support for its expansion program, since if war does break out it will bear the brunt of the fighting in the west virtually alone for the next few years."²

¹Heinkel, op. cit., pp. 205-6. Heinkel, because of his competition with Messerschmitt and festering grievances against Milch and Goering, does not always provide unbiased accounts.

²Irving, *Rise and Fall*, p. 73.

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A Major Pohle, who accompanied Hitler and Goering, made the following observations:

The day before a dress rehearsal of the visit was held. During the rehearsal, Udet gave a speech in which he mentioned each individual model and made a number of incautious predictions as to how soon each would be ready at the unit level. I immediately mentioned my reservations to Jeschonnek, and as a result Udet was more careful the next day. Any tour of this kind has a certain fascination for the participants. Goering simply let himself be carried along by this fascination, but Hitler was not taken in to the same degree. Nevertheless, this visit to Rechlin was poison for Hitler as well as for Goering.¹

Milch and Udet treated Goering and Hitler to an impressive display at the experimental station at Rechlin on 3 July 1939. The He-100 and the Me-209 that had impersonated the He-112 and Bf-109 respectively and an overloaded He-111 with rocket assisted takeoff were put through their paces.² Udet had ordered Heinkel to cease flight tests on his rocket power plane, the He-176, until 3 July so that nothing would threaten the demonstration.³ Hitler also saw the Ju-88, a new 30-millimeter cannon mounted in a Me-110, a high altitude pressurized cockpit and a procedure for starting engines in sub-zero temperatures.⁴

Most of these items did not become operational for years. On 13 September 1942, Goering raged:

I witnessed demonstrations at Rechlin before the war and I can only say, what bunglers our alleged magicians are! The things which I, and the Führer as well, were shown, have never come true.⁵

In March 1942, Goering expressed similar sentiments when he returned to Rechlin:

¹Richard Suchenwirth, *Command and Leadership in the German Air Force* (USAF Historical Studies: No. 174: Air University, July 1969), p. 84.

²Irving, *Rise and Fall*, p. 73.

³Heinkel, op. cit., pp. 220-221. Udet canceled the He-176 program primarily because it could not exceed 215 mph in speed before the fuel ran out. Green, *Warplanes*, p. 595.

⁴Irving, *Rise and Fall*, p. 74.

⁵Suchenwirth, *Command and Leadership*, p. 84.

Actually I had made up my mind not to set foot again inside the testing station at Rechlin after the way its engineers deceived the Führer and me during an inspection visit in the summer of 1939, when they really sold us "a bill of goods." As a result of what he had seen during this visit, the Führer made a number of important decisions. We have only our good fortune to thank that things turned out as well as they have and that the consequences were not more serious.¹

Apparently, Hitler decided to bring matters to a head during the up-coming Polish crisis because of the things he had seen at Rechlin.²

Access to Hitler remained limited until the middle of the war. Other testimony supports Hitler's isolation. Justice Jackson quizzed Kesselring at the Nuremberg Trials:

So the only channel through which information as to the state of the Air Force would reach Hitler was through Hermann Goering, is that a fact?

Kesselring: Hermann Goering and, from time to time, State Secretary Milch, deputy of the Reich Marshal.³

Von Below, Hitler's Luftwaffe adjutant, concurred.⁴

According to Heinkel, Hitler did not even know about the troubles of the He-177, a four-engined bomber that Udet had required to dive-bomb:

When I mentioned the obstinate insistence upon a dive bombing performance, Hitler sprang to his feet, "But that's madness," he cried. "I've heard nothing of this until today. Is it possible that there can be so many idiots."⁵

The failure to produce an adequate four-engined heavy bomber greatly hindered the Germans in their attack on Britain.⁶

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 85.

³ IMT, Vol. 9., p. 202.

⁴ Suchenwirth, *Command and Leadership*, p. 233.

⁵ Heinkel, op. cit., p. 206.

⁶ For a discussion of the four-engined bomber program see Schliephake, op. cit., pp. 38-39, 48-49.

Hitler apparently knew little beyond what Goering and Milch told him. Hitler did not base his claims on any detailed knowledge of the quantity and quality of the Luftwaffe. Hitler's adversaries during the 1930s knew even less than he did. As Goering said in the summer of 1935, he did not care whether the entire output between 1933 and 1935 would "be consigned to the trash heap;" it mattered instead that industry produce enough aircraft "to impress Hitler and to enable Hitler, in turn, to impress the world."¹

In 1935, Hitler apparently informed Goering that the next year Germany would finally throw off the remaining Versailles restrictions. Goering felt that rearmament had not progressed enough to allow the Germans a free hand, especially to abrogate Versailles by reoccupying the Rhineland.

"The British and French will come in and squash us like flies," Goering warned.

"Not if we buzz loudly enough," Hitler replied.²

A number of episodes expose Hitler's ignorance regarding the state of Luftwaffe rearmament. In 1937, Goering briefed Hitler on the technical capabilities of the Luftwaffe and projected the image that it could do virtually anything. A comment by one of the officers in attendance that the Luftwaffe possessed no up-to-date bombs shocked and angered Hitler, who had accepted Goering's testimony. Afterwards Goering reproached his officers and dismissed the argument that the chief of state should know the actual strength of the armed forces.

Several days later, Hitler had hit upon a solution to the bomb problem, "...Germany has more than enough of those metal cylinders used for oxygen, acetylene, etc. We can fill these as explosives and use them as bombs!"

Although one of the Luftwaffe officers present expressed some concern about the technical capabilities of such bombs, Goering exclaimed:

¹Suchenwirth, *The Development of the German Air Force*, p. 151.

²Leonard Mosley, *Reich Marshal: A Biography of Hermann Goering* (Doubleday: New York, 1974), p. 203.

My Führer, may I express my thanks for this wonderful solution! I must admit that none of us could have thought of such an ingenious idea! You, and you alone, have saved this situation. Good Lord, to think that we're all such dumbbells! I shall never be able to forgive myself.¹

Later Hitler would propose concrete bombs.

The Number's the Thing

During the 1930s, Hitler and Goering focused on numbers out of the belief that size rather than military effectiveness would influence Germany's adversaries better. This presumption proved correct. Even the Luftwaffe did not conduct a study of their ability to conduct operations against England until 1938.

Although British writers have questioned whether Hitler lied when he claimed that Germany had achieved parity with Britain in March 1935, Hitler himself may have thought that Germany had in fact, or would rapidly achieve parity. Milch and Goering had repeatedly impressed Hitler with the progress of German rearmament.² In fact, Hitler probably did not care whether he told the truth or not; he was more concerned with impressing the British and securing the Anglo-German naval agreement.

After the Munich crisis in September 1938 came a succession of demands that demonstrated Goering's failure to understand the limits of Luftwaffe production capacity. After Munich, Goering reported on 14 October 1938 that Hitler demanded a gigantic production program, against which previous efforts would pale in significance; including a "five-fold expansion" of the Luftwaffe. Britain became the enemy and 1942 the target against which to plan. Milch thought that the Luftwaffe could not fulfill Hitler's program but failed to convince

¹Heinz Rieckhoff, *Trumpf oder Bluff?* (Geneva: Verlag Interavia, 1945). Hitler's idea does have merit, although the acetylene containers could not be aimed accurately.

²Generalleutnant Andreas Nielsen, *The German Air Force General Staff* (USAF Historical Studies: No. 173: Air University, June 1959).

Goering. Nevertheless, the Luftwaffe did not succeed in dramatically increasing production in 1939 and suffered severely from shortages in skilled labor and raw materials. Only the airframe industry approached its quotas.¹

Quotas for ammunition fell way behind schedule. In June 1939, Milch became concerned that the Luftwaffe lacked sufficient bombs for operations beyond thirty days and requested more. Hitler denied Milch's request, "Nobody inquires whether I have any bombs or ammunition, it is the number of aircraft and guns that count."²

The haphazard and broad front expansion of the Luftwaffe left the impression that no strategic ideas guided its development:

I do not believe that the German air force, which has by now grown to a very formidable strength, has been built up with a view to attacking any particular enemy. Its organization, equipment and the distribution of units has up till now given little indication of any strategical design and rather conveys the impression that the aim has been to build up the strongest possible air force in as short a time as possible. It is believed that the role of the force is to provide a threat to other nations who might consider resisting German aims by force of arms. I do not suggest that, because the German air force may later become a less effective deterrent, it will therefore be put to use this year, but I consider it worthy of note that, if Germany does decide that war is necessary for her aims, the year 1939 is the most suitable from the air point of view.³

These comments expressed by the British Air Attaché in Berlin on 15 February 1939 demonstrated that even foreign observers had caught on to the purpose of the Luftwaffe.

¹Homze, op. cit., pp. 222-238.

²Irving, *Rise and Fall*, p. 73; Mason, op. cit., p. 265.

³DBFP, 3, IV, pp. 119-120; enclosure to a communique from the British ambassador to Berlin, Henderson, to the British Foreign Minister, Halifax.

From the beginning when Milch and Goering assembled the risk air force, the Luftwaffe projected an image of strength. The succession of foreign policy successes vindicated this victory of style over substance, of numbers over effectiveness. The Luftwaffe eventually paid the price in defeat for its earlier political successes.

PROPAGANDA: PORTRAYING HITLER AS A MAN OF LIMITED AND LEGITIMATE OBJECTIVES

The dispute over Hitler the planner versus Hitler the opportunist stems in part from Hitler's own attempts to portray himself as a man with limited objectives while simultaneously bullying each of his opponents in turn. Hitler himself thought that he had shown his hand too early with *Mein Kampf*.

Politics, for Hitler, was purely pragmatic. He did not except his own book of confessions and professions, *Mein Kampf*, from this general rule. Large parts of it were no longer valid, he said. He should not have let himself be pinned down to definite statements so early.¹

Once in power, Hitler wanted to appear as a "traditional" German statesman in order not to threaten the rearmament program necessary to build the military strength to achieve his goal of Lebensraum in the East and the domination of continental Europe. Hitler succeeded in associating himself with the policies of his predecessors and won continuation of the appeasement policies of Britain and France as a reward. Hitler's abilities to exploit opportunities as they arose and his expressed willingness to back down when opposed certainly contributed to his image as a man trying merely first to redress the grievances of Versailles and second to achieve the Greater Germany denied his predecessors.

Hitler's conversations with Rauschning in the early 1930s betray Hitler's methods after he assumed power. In 1932, Hitler thought that propaganda would greatly aid Germany in its struggle against its opponents:

¹Albert Speer, op. cit., p. 122.

Our strategy...is to destroy the enemy from within, to conquer him through himself.¹

The place of artillery preparation for frontal attack by the infantry in trench warfare will in the future be taken by revolutionary propaganda, to break down the enemy psychologically before the armies begin to function at all. The enemy must be demoralized and ready to capitulate, driven into moral passivity, before military action can even be thought of.²

Hitler's belief that he would engage in war only if he could succeed with one blow smacks of Clausewitz; the role he accords air power echoes Douhet.

I shall never start a war without the certainty that a demoralized enemy will succumb to the first strike of a single gigantic attack....A single blow must destroy him. Amid attacks, stupendous in their mass effect, surprise, terror, sabotage, assassination from within, the murder of leading men, overwhelming attacks on all weak points in the enemy's defense, sudden attacks, all in the same second without reserves or losses: that is the war of the future. A gigantic, all-consuming blow. I do not consider the consequences; I think only of this one thing.³

After assuming power, Hitler did not succumb to his own ravings (threats would reappear later after Hitler had properly prepared the image of German military strength). When Hitler withdrew from the League of Nations in October 1933 (to avoid a public trial of German clandestine rearmament), he set the pattern for his later foreign policy coups by holding out the olive branch to France in his radio address on 14 October 1933. His announcement on a Saturday was in this case coincidental, but he did not fail to notice the confusion of sluggish foreign ministries trying to respond on a Sunday.⁴ In his announcement, Hitler indicated that Germany demanded

¹Herman Rauschning, op. cit., p. 8.

²Ibid., p. 9.

³Ibid., p. 10.

⁴Bennett, op. cit., p. 486.

...only that measure of security which guarantees to the nation the tranquility and liberty necessary to carry on peaceful work. The German government and the German nation are prepared to secure these justified demands of the German people by means of negotiations and treaties.¹

Hitler expressed to Rauschning his attitude toward possible treaties and the cautious path that Germany had to follow until she had achieved rearmament:

[Hitler] accepted unreservedly my view that Germany must provide no excuse for any other country to proceed against her. It was necessary, he considered, that all arbitrary acts should be avoided, and that an absolute national discipline should make any "incidents" impossible. Apart from this, he was prepared, he said, to make any agreement that would publicly guarantee him a measure of rearmament.

I am willing to sign anything. I will do anything to facilitate the success of my policy. I am prepared to guarantee all frontiers and to make non-aggression pacts and friendly alliances with anybody. It would be sheer stupidity to refuse to make use of such measures merely because one might possibly be driven into a position where a solemn promise would have to be broken. There has never been a sworn treaty which has not sooner or later been broken or become untenable...why should one not please others and facilitate matters for oneself by signing pacts if the others believe that something is thereby accomplished or regulated. Why should I not make an agreement in good faith today and unhesitatingly break it tomorrow if the future of the German people demands it? I shall make any treaty I require. It will never prevent me from doing at any time what I regard as necessary for Germany's interests.²

Hitler's tactics succeeded. The French ambassador to Berlin reported to Neurath that "Daladier's position in France had been made more difficult by [Hitler's radio] speech, since the offer of direct negotiations had been made too 'brutally.'"³ Hitler reveled in his triumph; to his cabinet he said:

¹DGFP, C, II, p. 2.

²Rauschning, op. cit., pp. 109-110.

³DGFP, C, II, p. 11.

...the political situation had developed as was to be expected. Threatening steps against Germany had neither materialized nor were they to be expected... the internal conflicts among the leading powers in the Disarmament conference were evident. Germany could now let events take their course. No step by Germany was necessary. Germany was finding herself in the pleasant situation of being able to watch how the conflicts between the other powers turned out. The critical moment had probably passed.¹

On subsequent opportunities, Hitler repeated the formula he discovered during the crisis over the withdrawal from the disarmament conference and the League. Hitler expressed no sentimentality over the deceptions he used. Hitler, in fact, styled himself a student of Machiavelli:²

I am carrying on power politics, with the aid, if I choose, of naked, ruthless force, and what earthly difference can there be between using every means of trickery and misrepresentation and ordering my armies to march?³

I recognize no moral law in politics. Politics is a game in which every sort of trick is permissible, and in which the rules are constantly being changed by the players to suit themselves.⁴

Hitler also realized that he must not expose his tactics:

Not that I have any desire to appear as more contemptuous of the moral code than the generality of men. Why make it easy for people to attack me? I myself can quite easily give my policy a coloring of morality and show up my opponents' motives as hypocritical.⁵

¹Ibid., p. 12.

²Rauschnig, op. cit., p. 273.

³Ibid., p. 278.

⁴Ibid., p. 280.

⁵Ibid., p. 281.

When Rauschning pointed out that trickery and deception would soon lose their value as instruments of policy--witness the history of Italian city states--Hitler responded that "he would be content if it worked long enough to break through the political walls that surrounded Germany."¹

In each successive coup, Hitler would proffer peace and understanding and explain his actions in terms of the legitimate German quest for security. Just as Hitler had defused criticism of his withdrawal from the League by suggesting negotiations with the French, he would thwart subsequent attacks by emphasizing his peaceful intentions. On 22 May 1935 when Hitler renounced the armament priorities of the Versailles Treaty, he asserted that Germany would respect all other treaties unless mutual negotiations led to their revision:

Therefore, the Government of the German Reich shall absolutely respect all other articles pertaining to the cooperation of the various nations including territorial agreements; revisions which will be unavoidable as time goes by it will carry out by way of a friendly understanding only.

The Government of the German Reich has the intention not to sign any treaty which it believes not be able to fulfill. However, it will live up to every treaty signed voluntarily even if it was composed before this government took over. Therefore, it will in particular adhere to all the allegations under the Locarno Pact as long as the other partners of the pact also adhere to it.²

Locarno had affirmed the demilitarized status of the Rhineland. During this same speech to the Reichstag, Hitler also claimed:

Germany neither intends nor wishes to interfere in the internal affairs of Austria, to annex Austria or to conclude an Anschluss.³

¹Ibid., p. 278.

²NCAA, Vol. I, p. 435.

³Ibid., pp. 468-469.

Hitler excused the reoccupation of the Rhineland by arguing that the Franco-Soviet alliance had effectively negated Locarno. To soften the blow of remilitarization, in his speech to the Reichstag on 7 March 1936, Hitler claimed:

We have no territorial claims to make in Europe. We know above all that all the tensions resulting either from false territorial settlements or from the disproportion of the numbers of inhabitants cannot, in Europe, be solved by war.¹

On 30 January 1937 Hitler announced to the Reichstag that the "period of surprise actions" had finished.² As the year progressed, Hitler seemed to make good his claim. In March 1938, the Austrian takeover again raised fears of "surprise actions."

In the Führer's name, Goering disclaimed any action directed at Czechoslovakia during the Austrian crisis. He asserted the entry of German troops into Austria was "nothing more than a family affair" and that they would not come closer than 15 kilometers to the Czech frontier.³

During the Munich crisis, Hitler claimed that his demands had ceased. On 26 September 1938, in his Sportsplatz speech, Hitler exclaimed:

And now before us stands the last problem that must be solved and will be solved. It is the last territorial claim which I will have to make in Europe, but it is the claim from which I will not recede and which God willing, I will make good.⁴

Hitler capped the Munich crisis with the "last territorial demand." But the peaceful absorption of the Sudetenland did little to satisfy and more to irritate Hitler. Schacht overheard Hitler exclaim, "That damned Chamberlain has spoiled my parade into Prague."⁵

Hitler would have his parade into Prague in March 1939 and Chamberlain finally realized that Hitler had not made his "last territorial demands."

¹ Ibid., p. 443.

² Fest, op. cit., p. 509.

³ DGFP, D, II, pp. 157-160.

⁴ Fest, op. cit., p. 556.

⁵ Ibid., p. 565-6.

The Luftwaffe and England: Strategic Bombing and Deception

Although Milch and Goering actively promoted the image of a strong strategic Luftwaffe, they resisted the idea of actually attacking Britain. Unlike the Navy, few within the Luftwaffe actually believed war with Britain possible. Udet confessed to Heinkel on 1 November 1939, "I never really considered the possibility of war with Britain."¹ The attitudes of the senior Luftwaffe illustrate that Hitler often did not share his strategic design. Hitler always remained ambivalent about Britain, believing until well into the war that he could forge an alliance with it. The actions that the Germans took to bring the war to Britain provide a test of whether Hitler's ambivalence translated into inaction. The fate of the strategic bomber reinforces the idea that Hitler, failing cooperation, attempted first to intimidate and then to coerce Britain into alliance.

The first Chief of Staff of the Luftwaffe, Wever, believed in a balanced air force. He ordered a four-engine heavy bomber and Dornier produced the Do-19 and Junkers the Ju-89. These bombers had such inadequate engines that they could barely attain a top speed of 175 mph and could not meet initial specifications. In 1935 Goering found the Ju-89 unimpressive but Blomberg seemed pleased with the Do-19.²

The technical inadequacies of the first prototypes of the "Ural" bombers did not daunt Wever's enthusiasm for strategic bombing. To the Air Academy in 1935, Wever asserted:

...in a war of the future, the destruction of the armed forces will be of primary importance.

This can mean the destruction of the enemy air force, army, navy, and of the source of supply of the enemy's forces, the armament industry...Only the nation with strong bomber forces at its disposal can expect decisive action by its air force.³

¹Richard Suchenwirth, *Command and Leadership*, p. 86.

²Schliephake, op. cit., p. 38.

³Richard Suchenwirth, *Command and Leadership*, p. 12.

Wever put his ideas into practice. At the 1936 war games, Wever expanded the initial missions of the Luftwaffe from air superiority and support to exploit an army breakthrough to large scale raids on military and political targets around Prague. Personally, Wever intended to convince the enemy of the hopelessness of resistance.¹ The drive to maintain a strong strategic element of the Luftwaffe died with Wever on 3 June 1936.

Hitler, himself, however much he threatened doom and despair, never expressed much interest in whether the Luftwaffe could carry out his threats. It only mattered that his opponents could not totally discount his claims.

Goering stopped the development of the Ju-89 and the Do-19 on 29 April 1937. Although controversy still reigns over the soundness of Goering's decision, especially in light of the Battle of Britain and the Russian campaign, technical, economic and strategic reasons justified his action. The hard-pressed German air engine industry could not supply sufficiently powered engines in 1937 to grant the prototypes adequate performance. Milch apparently thought the advantages claimed for the four-engine bomber, "pure fantasy," and claimed that "the Ju-88 program leaves no industrial capacity for the production of four-engined bombers."² Goering ordered development work on the Ju-89 and Do-19 discontinued on 29 April 1937. The four-engined bomber project would proceed slowly until adequate engines became available. Politics dictated speeding up this program when war with Britain loomed as a possibility after the Munich crisis.³

¹ Ibid.

² Mason, op. cit., p. 257, emphasis in text; Irving, *Rise and Fall*, p. 54.

³ Schliephake, op. cit., pp. 39, 49.

More important than economic or technical reasons, the Luftwaffe could not identify a strategic mission that a four-engine bomber could perform. Ju-88s and He-111s had ample range, payload and turnaround to bomb Paris, Brussels, Prague and Warsaw.

The Luftwaffe did not abandon the four-engine bomber but placed it on hold. Heinkel received a contract to develop the ill-fated He-177 and the Ju-89 and Do-19 prototypes became grist for Goebbel's propaganda mill. Udet thought that the He-177 might never have anything but propaganda value too as he confided to Heinkel in 1938:

It's possible that Jeschonnek and the General Staff may not ever have any use for it. *None of them think that is going to war with England...* Before it was decided to concentrate all our efforts on the twin-engine, dive-bomber program, the "Iron Man"...discussed things thoroughly with the Führer. A war against England is completely out of the question. If anything happens at all, it will be a conflict with Poland or Czechoslovakia. The Führer will never let us in for a conflict which might take us beyond the confines of the Continent. Consequently, it will suffice for any potential conflict if we have a medium bomber with relatively limited range and relatively low bomb-carrying capacity, but with a high degree of diving accuracy, in short, the new Ju-88. And with the means at our disposal, we can build as many of these as the Führer wants. At the same time, it will impress England and France sufficiently so that they will leave us alone in any case. We shall continue to develop the He-177 as an experimental aircraft, perhaps as a long-range aircraft for the Navy.¹

Thus, Udet saw only that a four-engine bomber may fulfill an anti-shiping or ASW mission but not a strategic one.

Only after Munich did the He-177 enter operational Luftwaffe planning. An order dated 7 November 1938 requested as many He-177s as possible. The plan also called for 13 Seekampfgeschwader to use exclusively against naval targets, 30 Kampfgeschwaders to use as a strategic air force and 15 medium bomber groups directed at France.

¹Suchenwirth, *Command and Leadership*, p. 82, emphasis added.

The Luftwaffe now considered war with Britain a possibility and knew from Felmy's studies that they could do very little without a strategic heavy bomber force and only little better with forward bases for the medium bombers in Belgium.

The attitudes of the senior Luftwaffe staff seem to reflect Hitler's. While not considering war with Britain a real possibility, they nevertheless felt that they needed a force sufficient to deter outside intervention in the German expansion eastward. The British declaration of war on 3 September 1939 caught not only Hitler but the Luftwaffe by surprise. Yet, Hitler made the next move in May 1940. Even during the "phony war," the image of the Luftwaffe succeeded in deterring intervention.

V. CONCLUSIONS

German strategic deception in the 1930s illustrates how one country manipulated perceptions of its intentions and military capabilities to achieve its political objectives. The specifics of German actions often reflected circumstances peculiar to the times; to label an aggressor any country that practices deceptions that resemble the Germans' would mistake form for substance. Methods do not necessarily imply ends. However, the techniques, methods and principles that guided German deception do exemplify how to manipulate perceptions to serve politics. Schooled by his own admission in Machiavellian principles, Hitler pursued his aims with a theory, however misguided, of how other countries, especially Britain, would react to his policies. His strategic methods followed Moltke's maxim: "Strategy is a system of expedients and makeshifts." The success and failures of German strategic deception contribute to how perceptions influence international politics.

PRINCIPLES OF DECEPTION

To a certain extent, Hitler followed in the footsteps of traditional German statesmen. With his initial aims--the redress of Versailles and the first true unification of Germans in a single state--he carried the banner of Weimar and the Second Reich. His methods did not betray his ultimate aims. Hitler succeeded in deceiving good and moral men because he could, while weak, exploit their preoccupation with concerns other than a resurgent Germany and appeal to their sense of justice, and while strong, seize the moment and appeal to their sense of Machtpolitik. Just as Hitler exploited the moral injustice of Versailles, he played the role of a legitimate and unsatisfied great power to the hilt. Hitler appeared a man of limited objectives because he unraveled the fabric of Europe only thread by thread. He did not plunge Europe into world war but, risking it, others called his bluff.

Perceptions of both intentions and capabilities provide grist for deception. Images of military strength may contribute to attempts to disguise intent and vice versa. A country may gain much by deception but it also risks much. Hitler accepted those risks and acknowledged that deception would work only so long as no one called his hand. But he paid the price of his policies when Britain and the Soviet Union accelerated rearmament to meet his apparent threat. Other countries had to respond not to the actual military strength of Germany but the image that Hitler and his subordinates in the Luftwaffe and the Propaganda Ministry projected.

Capabilities

Countries occasionally disguise intent. Often they pursue policies aimlessly, putting out fires where they appear if they have had sufficient foresight to procure the necessary equipment. Few countries before the Second World War attempted to coordinate images of their military strength with their foreign policies. The simple novelty of the Nazi approach--a style apparently not seen since Renaissance Italy--helped in confusing the British who saw "no likely motive" for the Germans deliberately to manipulate the perceived size of their forces. The principles that worked for the Germans may have mixed success against countries sensitive to the Munich and not the 1914 analogy.

Allow Opponents to Produce the Basis for Deceptions. The victim provides the best source for opportunities to deceive. Deception relies on the expectations of the victim. The most successful deception makes the victim extremely certain but wrong. The Germans exploited British fears about strategic bombing. For the bomber that would always get through, the Germans had the Do-19 and the Ju-88. For doubts about the efficacy of strategic bombardment, the Germans had dive-bombing, maneuvers with clear strategic missions, records set by the rejected four-engine prototypes and so on. The Germans also exploited British wishful thinking. The Milch *rise-en-scène* played on British hopes that they would not need to accelerate

their rearmament. The British gladly bit the hook that their rearmament program would yield parity with the Germans and Milch gladly reeled them in.

Reinforce Preconceptions. After having the victim set the basis for deception, reinforce his preconceptions and expectations. If the victim strongly believes that a particular mode of defense works very well, then reinforce that belief and spend resources elsewhere. Afflicted by the Maginot mentality, the French obviously believed defense fortifications extremely effective. Goebbels exploited this belief to perpetrate the West Wall hoax. The Germans continued to play on the belief in German efficiency. Ten pencils laid neatly on each desk impressed Vuillemin much more than the bogus H-112U. The Germans continued to pose the image of a strategic bombing force long after they had postponed its development.

Stage Demonstrations. Impressive displays of military capability often pay ample dividends, not only domestically but also in influencing the assessments of opponents. The Nuremberg rallies and May Day parades provided opportunities to "tease" the victim with glimpses of weapons under development. Sufficiently well staged, these displays also captured the eye of the world media, intimidating with the "precision of Frederician grenadiers." Little does it matter that performance on the parade ground may not translate into efficiency under combat.

Maneuvers, occasionally used to disguise surprise attacks, can also heavily influence assessments of military performance. German excursions into strategic bombing during 1937 maneuvers caught the eye of the world press and merely underscored the threats uttered by Hitler, Goering, and Milch. The combined arms demonstration in 1937 also impressed foreign observers and aided Hitler in his foreign policy coups of the next year. The propaganda flights during the Austrian and Czech takeovers warned that bombs could have fallen instead of pamphlets.

Adopt Shallow but Broad Rearmament to Tout Expansion, Narrow but Deep to Disguise Expansion. Under Weimar, the Germans developed a cadre system to disguise their rearmament. In the event of war, everyone in the service would advance in rank and assume greater

responsibilities than he had in peace. Hitler continued this scheme during his first two years, not wishing to threaten rearmament during its most critical stage. Once revealed, rearmament required a shallow but broad strategy initially to deter intervention that would stop German rearmament and later to prevent foreign involvement in Hitler's foreign policy coups. The secrecy of the clandestine rearmament period aided the program to exaggerate German strength. Surely the overt forces only represented a fraction of the true strength. The large paramilitary forces maintained by the Germans contributed to the uneasy feeling that the Germans had continued the cadre system developed under Weimar. The French, although they probably would not have acted anyway, succumbed to this deception when they decided not to intervene during the Rhineland occupation.

Exploit Procedural Uncertainties of Intelligence Operations.

Deception works much better with a good understanding of the victim's intelligence operations and predilections. Although deception often relies on the principle that the victim should be certain but wrong, inducing uncertainty may prove more profitable under particular circumstances. Intelligence services often display a tendency to overestimate an opponent's forces when they possess incomplete information because they need to plan against the implications of the worst threat. By understanding the collection procedures used by the victim, a deception planner can manipulate the information fed the victim to induce sufficient uncertainty to cause him to inflate his estimates. Such a scheme runs the risk of causing the victim to procure forces against the perceived threat in the long run, a cost which the deceiver must weigh against the benefits of greater freedom of political action in the short run. Hitler understood this principle and accepted the risks. The Germans knew that they had only a short time window within which to act.

Target "Sympathetic" Groups; When Dealing with Democratic Systems, Divide and Conquer. A good deception planner can exploit the factions within any political system to further his objectives. Churchill's constant harping about the extent of German rearmament in the 1930s served Hitler's political aims. By touting German military strength,

Churchill provided even better propaganda than Hitler secured through those English groups that sympathized with German aspirations. The Nazis also exploited the British press through leaks, such as during Ribbentrop's visit in late 1934, and interviews such as those with Ward Price.

An antagonist such as Churchill can play the role of a gadfly and inadvertently aid German deception. Hitler knew that he possibly sacrificed long-term military strength by exaggerating his current strength. Churchill magnified the current and future German threat in order to stimulate British rearmament. By emphasizing current apparent disparities, Churchill played unwittingly into Hitler's plans. Adamant enemies such as Churchill make the best agents of deception because no one can impugn their motives however much one can object to the consequences of their action. In a Congressional hearing, the U.S. Secretary of Defense, Harold Brown, once sharply criticized his questioner for playing into the hands of the Soviets when he questioned the extent of the U.S. strategic preparedness.

Structure and Time Deceptions to Accommodate the Political Processes of Opponents. Colvin thought that Milch had exploited the British budgetary process to serve his deception in 1937. If Milch had timed his deception to influence the choice of an appropriate air rearmament scheme, he displayed a quite sophisticated understanding of British policies. Most political systems work on a well-defined budget cycle which will determine the best time for deception. Deceptions will have their maximum effect when rearmament comes up for its yearly consideration. Political campaigns also provide ample opportunities for effective deceptions.

Intentions

Capabilities often supply new material for attempts to manipulate perceptions of intentions. Perceptions of capabilities influence assessments of intentions. If a country begins to procure ships specifically designed to fulfill an open ocean mission, then others will view that country as beginning the movement towards Weltpolitik. Hitler, partly to assuage British fears about German world designs,

partly to induce the British to accept German plans in the East, abjured a blue water fleet and signed the Anglo-German naval agreement. Hitler built a shallow but broad military to project the image that he could conduct swift campaigns. The image that a country projects of its military force heavily influences how others interpret its intentions.

Act Suddenly and Swiftly When Opportunity Presents Itself: Present the World with *Faits Accomplis*. If a country seems prepared for all contingencies or no contingencies in particular, then few can judge its intentions in any specific instance. To achieve strategic surprise requires that the victim misjudge the time or location of an attack. In less violent episodes, the victim should not anticipate the foreign policy initiatives. To succeed, a country must consolidate its position before others can act and deter intervention by an image of general overall military strength.

Disguising intentions through deception greatly aids a country in its quest to effect foreign policy coups. Other countries failed to anticipate Hitler's succession of coups from announcing universal military conscription in 1935 to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in 1939. Certainly some voiced concerns that the Germans would remilitarize the Rhineland or seize Austria and Czechoslovakia but the timing of these actions remained in doubt. By failing to prepare specifically for these actions, Hitler did not betray his true intent--to follow the dictates of his program when opportunity presented itself.

Always Leave an Exit. To act swiftly and suddenly often leaves a country unprepared. Hitler reoccupied the Rhineland with three battallions and airplanes with nonoperative guns. The German forces moved swiftly to raise the perceived costs of intervention. Hitler realized that if others intervened they would discover German weakness. During the Rhineland occupation Hitler was prepared to retreat rapidly if others began to act and compounded the deception of a strong military with the deception of a strong will and commitment.

Espouse Only "Reasonable" Objectives; Always Play the Role of the Aggrieved Party. The shackles of Versailles and the norm of self-determination that permeated the treaty provided the basis for Hitler's

policy of expansion. Hitler could continue the policies of his predecessors and appear as a German statesman stamped from the traditional mold. Hitler could mask his long-term policy of expansion with the short-term attempts to redress the "wrongs" of Versailles.

Set the Agenda, or Better Yet Have Others Set the Agenda. The art of achieving political objectives often requires patience and the cooperation of opponents. Setting the agenda of international problems often disguises intent by structuring the expectations of other countries. Hitler's various ploys over colonial demands animated British thinking and led them to set the agenda for negotiations that played into Hitler's hands. The British believed that Hitler desired colonies in part because Hitler occasionally appeared as a German leader in the tradition of William II. Even though Hitler had deferred colonial aspirations until the second phase of his program, he would use the colonial issue as a lever in his quest for a free hand in the east.

Launch Peace Initiatives. Hitler defused criticism and negative reaction against his foreign policy coups by immediately launching peace offensives. Hitler established this pattern when he withdrew from the disarmament conference in 1933 and then offered direct negotiations with the French too "brutally." Often Hitler would conclude alliances or negotiate, knowing full well that he would later appeal to changed circumstances to cease cooperation. Each demand in Europe would end his quest for the rectification of Versailles and begin a new era of peace. Only reluctantly would Hitler find himself forced to make the next demand.

Fabricate Pretexts and Uphold the Letter of the Law. Hitler displayed almost an obsession with ensuring a pretext for action. In May 1938, Hitler fantasied about assassinating the German ambassador to Czechoslovakia to justify an invasion. The SD, dressed in Polish uniforms, staged an attack on a German radio station to label Poland as the aggressor in the September 1939 conflict. Hitler instructed the leader of the Sudeten Germans, Heinlen, always to up his demands as the Czechs met them. Even if the pretext seemed artificial and cynical, Hitler understood that even the veil of legality would sow the seeds

of discord among his opponents and cause sufficient controversy to delay their intervention. Hitler understood the value of surprise and the need to act swiftly while creating as many obstacles as possible in the path of his opponents. Legal pretexts added to the deception wrought about a sizable military capability.

Leave Intentions Unclear Until the Last Minute But Prepare for All Contingencies. Hitler kept his own people in the dark as much as he did his adversaries. Clausewitz thought strategic surprise difficult because the preparations for an attack tipped off the victim. If a country fails to make any specific preparations or prepares only for generic contingencies (the Wehrmacht had to dust off Case Otto for the Austrian takeover, a plan not quite suited for the occasion), then no one, including the members of its armed forces, can divine its intentions. A policy that only vaguely sketches intentions (as for example, during the Hossbach conference) without specifying a blueprint for action permits a country to follow a course of action that easily masks the true long-range goals. At best, actions seem opportunistic and yield to subsequent historical interpretations such as those expressed by Bullock or A.J.P. Taylor. In the case of Nazi Germany, such an apparently opportunistic policy covers a definite program of expansion. Each expansionist success will fuel the preparations for the next.

Discredit Those Who Predict Accurately. Deception will not succeed if the victim expects it and acts to counter its effects. Good intelligence should reveal when some of the victim's interest groups have ignored or seen through a particular deception and have correctly predicted the deceiver's course of action or capabilities. If a group consistently predicts correctly, then the deceiver can discredit its predictive ability by simply failing to act as scheduled. Paradoxically, if a country acts on an accurate prediction to head off its opponent's actions, the predictions will fail to come true. Doubts will remain about whether the predictor had in fact foreseen the event correctly.

During the 1930s, the British Air Staff intelligence would consistently estimate the size of current German air strength correctly. The out year estimates would always prove wrong because the Germans

continually revised their rearmament programs. The British Air Staff also thought that the Germans could not rearm as fast as Churchill, among others, indicated, because they could not train so many pilots and crews and still have an effective fighting force. Events would prove British Air Staff Intelligence correct. Nevertheless, the British Cabinet did not heed its own Air Staff predictions about the problems of rapid rearmament but listened to their own fears, exacerbated by backbenchers, about the implications of the pace of German rearmament.

Despite the opportunities presented by undermining the credibility of the opponent's intelligence through deceptions, the Germans apparently did not adopt this tactic. The Germans inadvertently embarrassed foreign intelligence services when German attempts to deceive Austria with fake invasion preparations were correctly diagnosed. The next month when the Germans took over Austria, the foreign intelligence services must have emerged with their reputations slightly tarnished. This episode illustrates the principle of discrediting those who predict accurately.

Adverse Consequences

As Hitler acknowledged to Rauschning, cunning and deceit will not work indefinitely. Eventually, other countries will cease to believe the proclamations. By then it may be too late; the policy of deception thus succeeding in its objectives. As Machiavelli noted, a country should use deception in foreign policy only until it had gained a position of power.

Exaggeration Leads to Reaction. Exaggerating the size of one's military forces may lead others to launch rearmament programs. The Hitler claim of parity in the air led the British to begin rearmament in earnest. By magnifying the threat to enhance short-run political objectives a country may reap military problems in the long run. Hitler realized this when he argued that Germany had only a short time window within which to achieve its objectives.

Bluffs Called. Hitler succeeded in his deception as long as he did because the other European countries were unwilling or unable to

call his bluff. Hitler understood the weakness of his forces during the Rhineland occupation and would have withdrawn had the French intervened. Had the Austrians or the Czechs resisted in 1938, they would have found a German army much less effective than its reputation. In war, unlike peace, boasts must meet the test of reality. When Goebbels' V-weapons failed to materialize, they became objects of scorn in Allied propagandas.

Believe Own Propaganda; Fool Own People. Deception occasionally fools one's own people. According to Goering the demonstration that Udet and Milch staged at Rechlin in the summer of 1939 apparently had far reaching consequences. Because Hitler and Goering engaged in their threats idly, they possessed little detailed knowledge of the effectiveness of the Luftwaffe. Their susceptibility to the Rechlin display suggests that they may have actually believed their own propaganda, even though Goering had received Falmy's report and knew that the Luftwaffe could not effectively attack Britain.

Lose Credibility. The Czech role in the May crisis remains unclear, but it appears as if they attempted to deceive the British and French into believing that the Germans would launch an attack. When the British and French military attachés in Berlin attempted to verify the Czech claims, they found little substantiation. The Czechs lost credibility. The British began to regret their support of the Czechs and reaped Munich.

Strategic deception in peace often succeeds where similar deceptions in war will fail. In peace, few may risk hostilities to determine whether a country is bluffing. War changes the stakes.

GERMAN POLICY AND DECEPTION

Hitler had set Germany on a course that only deception or the weak will of his opponents could permit. Using deception, Hitler further weakened the resolve of France to act and led the British to view him as a man with legitimate grievances and limited aims even if somewhat unconventional in his methods. Hitler needed to buy time for rearmament and then to deter intervention in his succession of *coups de main*. Only deception could first disguise rearmament and then to exaggerate

the size of the forces once revealed. The myth of German might even bought Hitler the "phony war" and allowed him to attack France at his choosing although it failed to deter the French and British declarations of war after the invasion of Poland. Deception furthered deterrence.

Deception and Deterrence

Why the British failed to act against Hitler matters less than what the Germans intended when they continued their deceptions. Broadly, the Germans wished to forestall intervention. In the early years, Hitler distracted the British and French with the disarmament talks while accelerating rearmament under the veil of secrecy. Hitler used deception to cover his rearmament program. Secrecy would induce sufficient British and French uncertainty to forestall but not to deter their intervention.

After the unveiling of the Luftwaffe in March 1935, uncertainty about the size and quality of the Luftwaffe would play a major role in deterring outside intervention as Hitler succeeded in one foreign policy coup after another. Exaggerated estimates of German military might contributed to British and French inaction during the Rhineland reoccupation in 1936. In addition to the long-term deception to tout the Luftwaffe, the Germans had put together a plan to cause the French to overestimate grossly the size of the German forces in the Rhineland.

German deception continued to aid Hitler throughout 1938 and 1939. Britain and France failed to act against Germany to save Austria or Czechoslovakia. Britain and France only went through the motions of declaring war in September 1939, a response that surprised a Hitler convinced that he had deterred all forms of intervention. The image of an invincible Luftwaffe that threatened to leave London and Paris a heap of rubble contributed to Hitler's success.

Hitler's penchant for numbers over capability aided his deceptions and contributed to deterrence. Although deterrence has come to symbolize a defensive policy, it can and often does further aggression. The rapid and broad expansion of the Luftwaffe that left little resources for a sustained conflict projected a false image of German strength.

Even the British hit upon rearmament schemes that left their squadrons without reserves but promised deterrence through numbers.¹ The British failed while Hitler succeeded in deterrence. Both relied on deception.

Deception and Coercion

The repeated allusions to cities laid smoking in ruins aided the Nazis. Goering apparently crushed Hacha's remaining will in March 1939 by threatening to level Prague. Hitler attempted to bully the English through Gafencu. Hitler, Goering, and Milch knew that without the Low Countries a bombing offensive against England would prove impossible; with the Low Countries, the offensive would prove ineffectual. Thus, the Nazis acted as if they had capabilities they knew they lacked. Such deception did not require the Nazis to do more than capitalize on their attempts to secure deterrence.

Prior to Anschluss, the Germans did conduct a deception to induce Austrian cooperation. The sham invasion ironically foreshadowed an actual one. Such threats have appeared in earlier times as "demonstrations" along a country's border to coerce it to act and constitute deceptions only when a country intends not to carry through with them. Saber rattling and attempts to coerce through images of military might and will provide opportunities for deception that may founder when the victim calls the bluff. Unfortunately, the victim may find teeth behind the bluff. The Austrians correctly diagnosed the false German invasion and failed to be intimidated. The Germans, miffed at Austrian recalcitrance, invaded anyway.

Deception and *Faits Accomplis*

Until Germany swallowed the rump state of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, Hitler pursued objectives expected of a "traditional German statesman." Europe anticipated and predicted Hitler's succession of coups. Often intelligence services would predict Hitler's actions before even he had decided to act. Deception played at best only a

¹Gibbs, op. cit., p. 554.

minor role in the timing of Hitler's foreign actions. Rather, he often seized a propitious moment and surprised not only his adversaries but his own military and foreign service.¹ Very little planning for deception covered these foreign policy initiatives.

Hitler's style of foreign policy led him to act swiftly when opportunity arose. After war began, the German General Staff developed deception plans for each of its military operations. Even before the war, the General Staff assembled deception plans for actions it could anticipate such as Czechoslovakia or the preparations to reclaim the Rhineland. Despite this institutional planning for deception, Hitler apparently never authorized deception planning to confuse adversaries about his foreign policy coups. Instead, Hitler, like Bismarck before him, kept his own counsel and acted when events provided an opening.

Deception and Self-Delusion

Many of the deceptions perpetrated by the Nazis fell on fertile ground in the 1930s. Hitler played on fears that Britain and France already had about the invincibility of the bomber offensive and the efficiency of German industrial production. Whether the British and French succumbed to German deception, deceived themselves, or would have responded the same way with correct and perfect intelligence must await further work. Nevertheless, Hitler did exploit British and French capacity for self-delusion in his deceptions.

The good deception planner realizes that the preconceptions of the victim provide the most fertile ground for deception. To convince a victim to believe something he is already willing to believe or had a vested interest in believing is much easier than laying the groundwork for a new belief in the victim's mind. Intelligence can play a

¹For a discussion of surprise in international relations, see Michael Handel, "Surprise and Change in International Politics," *International Security*, 4(4), Spring 1980; and "Avoiding Political and Technological Surprise in the 1980s," in Roy Godson (ed.), *Intelligence Requirements for the 1980s: Analysis and Estimates* (National Security Information Center: Washington, D.C., 1980). I discovered these references too late to integrate them into my analysis.

major role in identifying a victim's preconceptions. Often, the victim publicly commits himself to positions and thus eases the work of the deception planner. The British and the French fears over the effect of strategic bombing pointed Hitler to the Luftwaffe as the major instrument of deception.

Germany's position and Hitler's ambition in 1933 necessitated that strategic deception would become a major instrument of German foreign policy. British and French fears pointed to Luftpolitik to deter intervention, a policy which continued to succeed even after the war with Poland. Deception proved a cheap means for a Germany capable of knocking out only one opponent at a time.

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